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ABSTRACT

This self-study training manual for teachers of young children with autism contains nine modules on behavior modification techniques. The modules address: (1) the ABC's of behavior, which discusses discriminating among words that describe feelings and words that describe behaviors, identification of examples of learned behavior, and defining and identifying examples of antecedents, behaviors, and consequences; (2) teaching the child to follow directions, which discusses reasons children do not follow directions, ways to make difficult directions easier for children to follow, what to do when a child follows a direction, and what to do when a child does not; (3) an introduction to reinforcement, which describes kinds of reinforcement and the necessity of catching a child being good; (4) how to use reinforcement with the student; (5) planning activities to increase appropriate behavior, which describes planning activities that are enjoyable and appropriate, anticipating problems during activities, and establishing reinforcement plans; (6) responding to undesirable behaviors and deciding which strategy to use; (7) deciding what to teach the student and breaking the skill down into steps; (8) teaching the student new skills and the hierarchy of prompts; and (9) encouraging the student to communicate. (CR)

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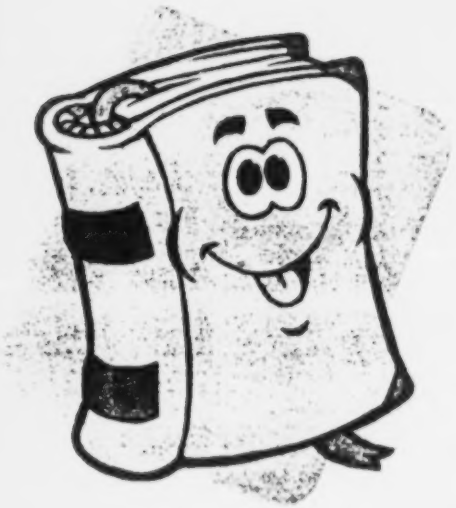
CLASSROOM STAFF TRAINING

(SELF-STUDY PACKET)



The LEAP Outreach Project
The Center for Collaborative Educational Leadership
University of Colorado at Denver
1380 Lawrence Street Suite 650
Denver, CO 80204
(303)556-3356 or 556-6631

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This training module was developed by:
The LEAP Outreach Project and LEAP Preschool

Project Director: Phillip S. Strain, Ph.D.
Project Coordinator: Cassandra Danko, M.S. Ed.
Project Coordinator: Judy Lawry, M.S. Ed.

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Providing training & technical assistance to meet the educational needs of young children with autism since 1981.

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LEAP PRESCHOOL

STAFF SKILL TRAINING PROGRAM

MODULE #1: The ABC's of Behavior

Main Ideas

✏Definition of Behavior

✏Discrimination Between Words that Describe Feelings and Words that Describe Behaviors

✏Identification of Examples of Learned Behavior

✏Defining and Identifying Examples of Antecedents, Behaviors, and Consequences

DEFINING BEHAVIOR

Before we can talk about a child's behavior, we need to identify what we mean by the word "behavior." Behavior refers to a specific action that a person does that can be observed. Just about everything we do can be described as a behavior. Turning the alarm clock off in the morning, brushing your teeth, making breakfast, and starting your car are examples of behaviors. Similarly with children, playing with toys, getting dressed, eating breakfast, and talking are all examples of behavior.

FEELINGS VERSUS BEHAVIORS

Good
Disruptive
Cooperative
Hyperactive
Aggressive

Often, when describing a child's behavior, we use words such as the ones listed above. For example, a teacher may speak of a student in her class and say, "she's very good," or a teacher may report to a parent that his son "can be very disruptive." The problem with these statements is that they do not tell use specifically what the child is doing. For example, when a parent says that her child is "Usually good," what does that mean? It may mean that the child puts her toys away when asked or that she eats everything on her plate. The same is true when a teacher tells a parent that his child can be "very

disruptive." Again, what does this mean? It may mean that the child throws toys, makes loud noises, and runs around the room. On the other hand, it could mean that the child does not listen to the teacher and distracts his friends by making faces.

Words such as these listed above often mean different things to different people. For example, a child may behave the same way with two people, but each person may describe the child's behavior differently. One person may describe the child's behavior by saying "she's active but it's not a problem," while the other person may report that the child is "hyperactive and unmanageable." Both of these descriptions communicate each person's feelings about the child's behavior, but they do not tell us what the child is actually doing.

Let's see if you can identify the difference between words that describe feeling and words that describe behavior:

Helpful	Lazy
Cries	Taps Pencil
Sits Down	Bad
Stubborn	Pleasant
Yawns	Combs Hair

One way to avoid using words such as "good" and "disruptive," which describe feelings, is to be specific when you talk about the child's behavior. When we describe behaviors specifically, we can more clearly communicate what a child

is actually doing. The following is an exchange between a mother and her child's teacher:

Mother: "J.J.'s been very bad at home. Is he bad in the classroom?

Teacher: "Oh, no. J.J. is usually good."

Mother: "Really? He's being good?"

Teacher: "Sure. Well, he's disruptive every once in a while, but not often."

How much do you feel you know about what J.J. is doing in the classroom? This mother and teacher were using words that describe their feelings about J.J.'s behavior. It is difficult to get a clear picture of what is happening in the classroom. Now read the exchange between the same mother and teacher when they use words that describe behavior more specifically:

Mother: "J.J.'s been hitting his brother a lot at home. Does he hit the other children in the classroom?"

Teacher: "Well J.J. hit another child three times last week. But this week he hasn't hit anyone."

Mother: "Are there other behaviors you are worried about at school?"

Teacher: "Yes there is one more thing. He often screams 'No' and runs away from me when I ask him to clean up."

One other way to illustrate the difference between feelings and behaviors is to think about a person you feel is "nervous." We may not all agree that a

person is "nervous." "Nervous" is a word that describes our feelings about a person's behavior. We usually, however, associate the word "nervous" with certain actions that we can observe -- for instance, nail biting, pacing the floor, or wringing hands. These activities represent behaviors we can observe and agree upon.

Let's see if we can change some words that describe feelings into words that describe specific behaviors. Read this sentence: "Jeffrey is the class clown." You could restate this, describing specific behaviors by saying, "Jeffrey tells jokes during class and makes faces to distract other children."

Here is another sentence which reflects someone's feelings about a child's behavior: "Tanya is a little angel." Can you restate this sentence into a specific statement that describes a behavior? (ANSWER: Tanya plays quietly and cleans up her toys when she is finished, or Tanya shares her toys with other children in the classroom.)

It will be helpful when you talk to students' parents or other teachers and professionals to clearly describe the behaviors you would like to discuss. Also, if someone is reporting to you about something a child has done and is unclear or not specific enough, ask them to clarify what they are describing.

LEARNED BEHAVIOR

Look at the following list of words:

blinking	dressing
using a spoon	breathing
talking	driving a car
sneezing	coughing
shivering	making a telephone call

These words are all examples of behaviors -- actions that can be observed. However, some of these are reflexes, or behaviors that our bodies do naturally, and some are behaviors that we learn at some time in our lives.

Most of the behaviors that we do each day are learned behaviors. Examples of learned behaviors that you may have done today include shutting off your alarm clock, getting out of bed, brushing your teeth, and having a cup of coffee. The children in your classroom have probably demonstrated many learned behaviors today. These might include: playing with toys, eating snack, taking their coats off, and talking to others. Which of the aforementioned behaviors are learned versus reflexive?

LEARNING SOCIAL BEHAVIORS

Just as children learn how to color, put together puzzles, and count, they also learn a variety of social behaviors. They learn behaviors such as how to walk quietly in a supermarket, how to share toys, and how to say "please" and

"thank you." Children also learn many undesirable behaviors, such as whining, hitting, and not doing what is asked of them. When we say that a child has learned these behaviors this does not mean that someone intentionally taught the child an undesirable behavior. What it does mean is that situations that occur before and after a behavior may, without our realizing it, have an effect on whether or not the child continues the behavior in the future.

HOW BEHAVIORS ARE LEARNED: ANTECEDENTS

If we say that children learn the majority of their behaviors, you may be wondering how all this learning occurs. When children are very young, much learning occurs through observations and interactions with parents. For example, many toddlers learn to say "bye-bye" by hearing their parents say "goodbye" when someone is leaving. The parents will also encourage the child by saying, "Say bye-bye."

In this example, saying "bye-bye" does not occur by itself. It happens in response to a specific situation -- typically, when someone is leaving and the parent tells the child to say "bye-bye." Rarely do you hear a toddler just randomly saying "bye-bye." This is true for all behaviors. They occur in response to a situation.

The word antecedent is used to refer to the situation that comes before a behavior. An antecedent can be any object, person, or event in the

environment that cues a person to do something. For example, the antecedent to a child dressing himself may be having his clothes put out where he can reach them. Or, the antecedent to a child signing for "cookie" may be the parent asking the child if she wants a cookie. Two antecedents for going grocery shopping may be an absence of certain food items and having some form of payment for purchases.

Because they will often cue a particular behavior, antecedents play an important role in determining behaviors. Antecedents set the stage for a behavior to occur. For example, if a child has been told he cannot have a cookie, he is less likely to "sneak" a cookie if the parent is standing in the kitchen. This behavior would be more likely to happen if the parent was out of the room. In this example, the parent's absence would be the antecedent to cue the behavior of taking a cookie. Similarly, a person is not likely to drive through a red light if the car following her happens to be a police car. If however, the antecedent is that it is late at night and there are no other cars in sight, this may be a cue to drive through the red light. In the following statements, identify the antecedent of the behavior:

1. Becky begins to cry when Greg takes her toy.
2. Robert throws his toys around the room when his teacher talks to other adults.
3. Dennis gives his teacher a hug when he walks into the room.

ANSWERS: 1. **A**ntecedent: Greg takes Becky's toy.
Behavior: Becky cries.

2. **A**ntecedent: Teacher talks to adults.
Behavior: Robert throws toys.

3. **A**ntecedent: Dennis arrives at school.
Behavior: Dennis gives teacher a hug.

HOW BEHAVIORS ARE LEARNED: CONSEQUENCES

In addition to antecedents, what occurs after a behavior is very important. The word consequence refers to what happens immediately after the behavior. Some consequences happen naturally like getting burned if you touch a hot stove or slipping when you walk on ice.

Sometimes a person responds to a behavior in a certain way. These consequences are learned responses. At some time in our lives we learned how to respond in these ways, whether through imitation or direct instruction. A child in school raises his hand and the teacher calls on him. A child forgets to clean up her toys and her teacher scolds her. Your mother comes for a visit and you give her a hug. Someone says "Hello" to you and you shake his hand.

A behavior may also be followed by a consequence that has been planned by another person. For example, a father gives his son an M&M each time he uses the potty or a policeman gives a ticket to someone that is speeding. In other words someone plans a certain consequence in an attempt to have an

USING CONSEQUENCES TO PREDICT BEHAVIOR

The type of consequence that follows a behavior will determine if the behavior will occur more frequently or less frequently in the future. Consequences can therefore be use to predict the future occurrence of a behavior. In general, consequences that are pleasant or rewarding result in the behavior occurring more often, while consequences that are unpleasant or punishing result in the behavior occurring less frequently.

Read over the three examples again on page 7 and determine 1) whether or not the consequence of the behavior is pleasant or unpleasant, and 2) make a future prediction about the future occurrence of the behavior.

a) Type of Consequence: Pleasant and rewarding.
Prediction: Behavior will occur more often.

b) Type of Consequence: Pleasant and rewarding.
Prediction: Behavior will occur more often.

c) Type of Consequence: Unpleasant or punishing.
Prediction: Behavior will occur less frequently.

Although this seems simple with these examples, it is sometimes difficult to break a behavior down in this way. It is especially difficult if it is unclear what the antecedent to a behavior is or if you are not sure if the consequence is pleasant or unpleasant to the child. If you want to try to change a child's behavior, however, you will be more successful if you carefully observe the

effect on whether the behavior continues.

Let's try to determine what both the antecedents and the consequences are in each of the following situations:

a) Jennifer cries when her mother puts her in bed. She insists on sleeping withher mother. Her mother is exhausted and does not feel like listening to her scream for an hour. She lets Jennifer sleep with her. (ANSWER: **A**ntecedent: Mother puts Jennifer to bed. **B**ehavior: Jennifer cries. **C**onsequence: Mother lets Jennifer sleep with her.)

b) Mrs. Jones is trying to toilet train her two year old daughter, Tamara. She sits Tamara down on the potty chair and says, "Go potty." After a few minutes, Tamara urinates in the potty. Mrs. Jones kisses Tamara and says, "That's a good girl, you went potty." (ANSWER: **A**ntecedent: Mrs. Jones sits Tamara on the potty. **B**ehavior: Tamara urinates in the potty. **C**onsequence: Mrs. Jones kisses and praises Tamara.

c) Before he leaves every day, Bryan asks his teacher if he can take home a toy from the classroom. His teacher says no. Bryan begins to cry. His teacher ignores his crying and leads him toward his mother (who has come to pick him up). (ANSWER: **A**ntecedent: Teacher says "NO". **B**ehavior: Bryan cries. **C**onsequence: Teacher ignores Bryan's crying.

This important sequence of events -- antecedent, behavior, consequence -- can be shortened to the "ABC's of behavior." It is through this chain of events that children learn. Looking at this chain of events will help us determine what will happen with a specific behavior in the future.

child and try to determine the current antecedents and consequences. With careful observation you may find that there is a way to change the antecedent or to plan consequences to influence the child's behaviors that you would like to change. In the future, we can talk about planning ways to reward behaviors that you would like the child to do more often and how to respond to behaviors you would like the child to do less often.

SUMMARY

a) A behavior is a specific action that can be observed. When teachers are specific in describing a child's behavior, more than one person can observe and agree upon the behavior.

b) Words such as "good" or "disruptive" reflect our feelings about a behavior; they do not tell us specifically what the child does.

c) Being specific about a child's behavior helps parents and teachers communicate more effectively.

d) Most behaviors that we engage in each day are learned behaviors.

e) Learned behaviors can be analyzed by looking at antecedents and consequences. Both antecedents and consequences play important roles in determining whether or not a behavior will occur.

f) Rewarding or pleasant consequences result in an increase in the frequency of the behavior. Punishing or unpleasant consequences result in a decrease in the frequency of the behavior.

BRINGING IT HOME

Fill in the following information:

1. Think of an example of one of the child's desirable behaviors. Identify the following:

   Antecedent: _____

   Behavior: _____

   Consequence: _____

   Type of Consequence: _____

   Prediction: _____

2. Think of an example of one of your child's undesirable behaviors. Identify the following:

   Antecedent: _____

   Behavior: _____

   Consequence: _____

   Type of Consequence: _____

   Prediction: _____

IN A NUTSHELL

1. A behavior is a specific action that a child does that you can observe.

2. When you are specific when talking about your child's behavior, it helps you to:

   a) clearly communicate to others what the child is actually doing;

   b) have more than one person agree upon the child's behavior; and

   c) observe the behavior without your feelings interfering.

3. Words such as "good" or "disruptive" reflect our feelings about a child's behavior; they do not tell us specifically what the child does.

4. Behaviors can be grouped into two categories -- those that we do naturally such as blinking, sneezing and shivering; and those that we have learned to do at some time in our life such as dressing, talking, or driving a car.

5. Most of children's behaviors are learned. Children learn social behaviors primarily through their interactions with adults and other children.

6. Behavior can be analyzed by looking at the following:

   Antecedent - the situation that comes before the behavior

   Behavior - the actual behavior that is observed

   Consequence - what happens immediately following the behavior

   (This process can be shortened to A-B-C for easy remembering.)

7. The following examples illustrate the A-B-C process:

   a) During freeplay, Robbie finds some markers in the teacher's desk and "paints" the walls with them. The teacher notices after about 3 minutes (the damage was already done) and is horrified by the mess. She scolds Robbie and sends him away from the area.

   Antecedent: Teachers busy, Robbie bored, markers available.
   Behavior: Painting walls with markers.
   Consequence: Scolding, sent away from area.

   b) Maria is playing with a dollhouse on the floor. Carlos comes over and they play with the dollhouse together. Their teacher notices that they are sharing the toys and not fighting. She comes over and says to the kids, "You two are playing nicely together."

   Antecedent: Maria is playing with the dollhouse.
   Behavior: Maria and Carlos sharing the toy.
   Consequence: Teacher praises Maria and Carlos.

8. Antecedents are important in determining if a behavior will occur. For example, placing a child's paint shirt in front of him at the easel may be an antecedent for him to put it on. For adults, the seat belt buzzer in the car is often an antecedent to buckle your seat belt. Antecedents set the stage for a behavior to occur.

9. Consequences often play the important role of strengthening or weakening the behaviors they follow. Rewarding or pleasant consequences result in the behavior happening more often. A special snack following a time when a child played and shared his toys with another child is likely to increase this type of playing. Smiles, hugs, and praise for following parent directions are likely to result in a child continuing to follow directions. Punishing or unpleasant consequences result in a behavior happening less often. Ignoring a child when he tantrums may result in fewer tantrums. Making a child go inside because he hit another child, may result in the child not hitting again when he plays outside in the future.

LEAP PRESCHOOL

STAFF SKILL TRAINING PROGRAM

MODULE #2: Teaching Children to Follow Directions

Main Ideas

- Reasons Children do not Follow Directions
- Ways to Make Difficult Directions Easier for Children to Follow
- How to Give Directions that are Clear and Specific
- What to do When a Child Follows a Direction
- What to do When a Child does not Follow a Direction

Listening, understanding, and following directions are important skills for children to learn. Young children learn these skills through their interactions with their teachers and other important people in their lives. Although children typically try to please people by doing what is asked of them, they will also, at times, test their limits by not following directions. Children may be trying to find a balance between pleasing the adults they interact with and asserting their own independence. The way the adult responds will affect how well the child follows directions in the future. This packet looks at why some children may not follow directions and some ways to teach children to follow more directions.

WHY WON'T THIS CHILD LISTEN TO ME?

When a child doesn't follow your direction you may feel frustrated or angry. You may think "Why won't she listen to me?" You may try many other ways to get the child to follow your directions. Look at the following example:

Megan was walking around the room going to a center when the teacher noticed that her shoe was untied. So the teacher stopped her and said "Megan, tie your shoe." Megan only looked at her, so the teacher provided more assistance by saying "Okay, here I'll help you. Take the two laces and cross them over." Megan continued to only look at her, so the teacher gave the same direction again.

Why did Megan not follow this direction? Sometimes children don't follow a direction because they do not understand what it means. The direction may be too complicated or too vague. It may not be clear if the child has a choice of whether or not to follow the direction. Some children also have a difficult time

remembering a direction that is given too far ahead of when the direction is to be followed. A direction such as "Don't forget to put the toys away when its time to clean up" may be difficult for a preschool child to remember. Here is another example:

> *Kristina was involved in a game with some other children. Her teacher called from the art table and said "Kristina, it is time for you to make your art project". Kristina didn't even turn her head when her name was called.*

Why didn't Kristina follow the teacher's directions? Another reason that a child may not follow a direction is that she may not hear what is said. She may not have been paying attention to her teacher or her teacher was too far away for her to hear. Children can get so wrapped up in a game, video, song, book or their own thoughts that they tune others out. Here is another example:

> *Alex was having a wonderful time playing on the playground during outside time. After about 45 minutes, the teacher announced "Okay, its time to go inside." Alex sat down on the ground and began to cry.*

Why didn't Alex follow the directions to go inside? A third reason that children may not follow directions is that they don't want to do it. If they cry, ignore the direction, or begin to do something else, they may get out of doing something they really don't enjoy. Another common example of this is when a parent tells a child to go to bed. It is difficult for a child to leave favorite activities and toys that are so rewarding to go to bed, so the child may think up several excuses (a drink of water, 15 more minutes of a TV show, or another story) or simply

ignore the direction. Here is another example:

Rob was standing by the door of the classroom leading out to the hallway. After a short period of time, Rob began to sneak out the door. His teacher said "Rob, please stay in the classroom" and then Rob giggled and ran out the door. His teacher chased after him saying "Okay, now I'm going to get you". After their chasing game was over, his teacher took his hand and walked him back. On the way she started to tickle him and they both were laughing.

Why didn't Rob follow the direction? Sometimes children don't follow directions in order to get extra attention. Often, when a child doesn't follow a direction, the teacher will repeat it, give additional assistance or turn it into a game. This attention can be very reinforcing and the child may try to get the same attention when the teacher can't or doesn't really want to play that game any longer. Another way a teacher may respond when a child refuses to follow a direction is engage in a discussion with the child. Even though this attention may not be all that reinforcing, it may be reinforcing enough for a child not to follow a direction. Children may also anticipate receiving this extra attention because that is something that has happened in the past.

HOW TO GIVE A DIRECTION

Many times the way you state a direction can give a child a better chance of successfully following it. If a child hears and completely understands, she is more likely to do what you have asked. However, if a child does not understand the direction, for whatever reason, she will not be able to follow it. Making sure the direction is clear, specific, and within the child's ability will

make it more likely that the direction will be followed.

One thing that is important to remember is to give one direction at a time. Complex, multi-step directions can be very difficult for children to follow. Giving a child too many directions at one time can be confusing for him and can reduce the chance that he will follow the direction. Initially, it is better to give directions one at a time. When you feel that a child is able to follow one step directions, you can begin to give more complex, multi-step directions.

Children may have a hard time following a direction that is too long or complicated. Giving short, simple directions is important for children that are just learning to follow directions. Instead of saying, "Ok now, Caitlin, be a big girl now and take your plate up to the trash" you can say "Caitlin, throw your plate away." This shorter sentence is easier for Caitlin to understand. She doesn't need to sort out which words actually go with what she is being asked to do. Extra words such as "OK, now", "How about if.." or "It would be really nice if you..." make a simple direction more difficult for a child to follow.

Another guideline for giving clear, simple directions is to be specific. Tell the child exactly what you want him to do. Specify the desired behavior in your instructions. If a child is throwing food on the floor and you say "Johnny", you have not told him what to do. If you say "stop it" it may temporarily stop the behavior, but he may still not know what you want him to do. If what you mean is "Johnny, keep your snack on the plate" then you need to tell him so.

Directions such as "be good", "stop", or "calm down" may be too vague for a child. They do not specifically tell a child what you want him to do.

Another important point to remember is to make sure that the child is paying attention to you when you give a direction. Remember that children can "tune out" adults. Before you give a direction, get the child's attention. Look at the child, make sure you are close to her, get down to her level, and say her name. You may need to eliminate some things that are distracting by turning off a video, taking her aside from other children, or getting between her and the toy she is playing with. You may also need to stop some distracting behaviors before you give a direction. If the child is running around, tantrumming, throwing toys or doing some repetitive verbal or motor behavior, you may need to calm her or interrupt the behavior to be sure you have her attention. To do this, you could hold her on your lap or rest your hand on her shoulder.

It is also important to, whenever possible, state your direction in positive terms. In other words, emphasize the positive behavior rather than the negative behavior when giving a child a direction. Saying "don't" or "no" only teaches the child what not to do; it does not tell the child what you want him to do. Stating instructions positively will help teach a child the correct behavior. For example, instead of saying "don't run", you can tell the child to "remember to walk", or instead of saying "stop screaming" you can say "play quietly".

Remember that you can give extra assistance, if necessary. Directions are much easier for children to follow if they are accompanied by gestures or other prompts. If you tell a child to put his coat on, you could point to his coat, gently guide him toward it, give the sign language for coat or show him a picture of a coat to make sure he understands what you are asking. It is common for adults to tap or point to a chair when they ask a child to sit down. When a child is learning a complex task such as scooping food with a spoon, you can give the direction as he helps by guiding the spoon with his hand. Assistance given with a direction can be in many forms.

The final guideline for giving a direction to a child is that you tell the child what you want him to do rather than asking or suggesting. Read these statements:

"You could hang up your coat."

"Let's see if you can sit still."

"Can you ask for more milk?"

These statements can be confusing to a child because it is not clear whether it is a direction that he must follow, or a "suggestion". Sometimes it is OK to give a "suggestion" to a child; it's part of a natural conversation. However, when a child does not have a choice of whether to follow the direction, a short, simple direction without extra words like "can you.." or "let's see if..." will be less confusing.

REDUCING THE NUMBER OF DIRECTIONS YOU GIVE

Here is an example:

> *Nicholas and his teacher were playing with blocks. His teacher gave the following directions within the first two minutes of play:*
>
> *"Give me the red block"*
> *"Put this block on top of your tower."*
> *"Let's build a gas station."*
> *"Go get a car."*
> *"Put the little man in the car."*
> *"Bring the car to the gas station."*
> *"Don't knock down my tower."*

One thing to remember about giving directions to children is to <u>give directions only when necessary</u>. Be careful not to give a large number of instructions in a short time period. This may frustrate or be stressful to a child. Reducing the number of directions you give does not mean you need to talk or interact with a child less frequently. You can replace the time spent giving directions with talking about what the child is doing, or commenting on things you see. This is a great method of language enrichment for a child.

Another way to reduce the number of directions you give to a child is to <u>offer choices</u>. During art you may say, "Would you like to color with crayons or markers?" Giving choices can help you guide the child in what to do while giving the child some control over the situation. Suggestions are another way to offer children choices. Instead of a direction such as "Put the game away", you could give the suggestion "If you want to, you could put the game away."

Stating this as a suggestion, however, implies that if he chooses, he can leave the game out. When a child does have a choice, be very clear about it. "If you want to...." or "Would you like to..." statements clearly give the child a choice. On the other hand, if he has no choice, be sure to state it as a clear direction.

You may also be able to give fewer directions if you redirect the child to a new activity rather that giving a direction. Here is an example:

Casey was banging on the tool bench for about 15 minutes, and the noise level in the classroom was beginning to get too high. This behavior was beginning to annoy the teacher and the other children, so the teacher decided to stop it. She knew, however, that if she told him to stop and removed the hammer he was using, that he may cry and tantrum for a long time. Instead, she got out some tools that were softer and placed them on the tool bench near him. When Casey began to play with them, his teacher removed the hammer and placed it out of reach.

In this example, Casey's teacher never needed to give a direction. She avoided a tantrum and made the situation easier to handle. Redirection is a strategy that can work in a number of situations. The key is to make the new activity or object more fun than what the child is currently doing.

DIRECTIONS THAT ARE DIFFICULT FOR CHILDREN

The most difficult directions for children to follow may be to end an activity that is very enjoyable or to begin an activity that they really don't like. Many children will cry, sit on the ground, tantrum, or simply ignore a direction that they don't want to follow. An illustration of this is the difficulty children have coming in from playing outdoors, as in the previous example. There are

some ways to make this type of situation a little easier and more positive. The first thing to think about is how you can make the direction or the transition from one activity to another more fun.

When you anticipate a difficult direction or transition, tell the child ahead of time what is going to happen. Simply letting a child know that there are just five more minutes before clean up makes it easier to be ready when you do give the direction.

A child may also be more willing to follow a direction if you wait until she finishes or has had some time to enjoy the activity she is involved in. You may not always be able to wait to give an important direction or to allow a child as much time as she wants at a certain activity.

AFTER THE DIRECTION IS GIVEN

When you give a child a direction, two things can happen. He follows your direction (or at least tries to) or he doesn't follow your direction. Either way, you have to be ready to respond. Here is an example:

Ms. P. said "Jeremy, please put the paintbrushes back in the cupboard." Jeremy immediately stood up, picked up the brushes and put them in the cupboard.

How should Ms. P respond? She should reward Jeremy for following the direction. It is important to reward children for following directions. Whenever a child follows a direction or tries to follow it, let him know that you are

pleased. Praise, a hug, or a smile will teach the child that following your directions is something that he should continue to do to get positive attention from you.

To give a child the best chance to get that positive attention, be sure that you have given the child plenty of time to follow a direction. For preschool children, this means to wait at least 5 seconds after you give a direction before you expect the child to begin to respond.

Now, what if Jeremy, in the previous example, didn't follow the direction? It is important to be ready with a consistent response. One important thing to remember is to not repeat your direction. Repeating the same direction several times may teach the child that he doesn't have to do it the first time. If the child does not follow the direction the first time, gently guide him to complete what you asked. Physical guidance means that you put your hand on the child's hand and help him follow your direction. Use only the amount of guidance needed for the child to complete the direction. Physical guidance can be just a "nudge" to the hand or arm or can be full, hand-over-hand assistance. This physical guidance works in several ways. If the child does not want to follow a direction, he learns that he needs to do what you ask. If he wants the extra attention of repeated directions or verbal discussion, you will help him do it without the extra attention. One way or another it will end up that he has followed the direction. Finally, if the child did not hear the direction or didn't

understand what you asked, the physical guidance will teach the child what words were said and what they mean. You don't really have to think too hard about why a child didn't follow a particular direction because the physical guidance will be a good consequence either way.

CONCLUSION

One of the most important things to remember when teaching children to follow directions is to "pick your battles". It is important to consistently follow through on a few, very important directions than to struggle with the child on many minor issues. If you have decided a "direction" is not important, make sure you choose your words carefully, giving suggestions or descriptions of what the child is doing. When it is important that the child follow a direction, such as staying with the group at circle time, or coming when you call, follow the guidelines that have been mentioned in this packet. Stop before you give a direction and ask yourself, "Is it important and am I willing and able to follow through?"

SUMMARY

1. Children may not follow direction if:
   a. they don't understand what it means
   b. they don't hear it
   c. they don't want to do it, or
   d. they expect extra attention

2. Some guidelines for giving directions to young children are:
   a. give one at a time
   b. give short, simple directions
   c. be specific
   d. state it positively
   e. make sure the child is paying attention
   f. give extra assistance, if necessary, and
   g. tell, don't ask

3. It is important to try to not to give too many directions to young children. A few guidelines A few guidelines for decreasing the number of directions you give are:

   a. give directions only when necessary
   b. offer choices, and
   c. redirect the child to a new activity rather than giving a direction.

4. Directions to end a fun activity or begin an activity that a child dislikes are difficult directions for children to follow. Try to make the directions easier and more fun. Some things you can try to make them easier are:

   a. make the direction or the transition from one activity to another more fun.
   b. give the child a warning when you anticipate a difficult direction or transition.
   c. wait until the child finishes or has had plenty of time to enjoy the activity he was involved in before giving a direction.

5. When you give a child a direction, two things can happen. Either the child follows it or tries to follow it or he refuses or ignores the direction. When he does follow a direction, praise or reward him.

6. Give the child plenty of time to follow a direction and praise him when he does. If the child does not follow a direction, do not repeat it. Instead, physically guide him to complete it.

7. And remember, "pick your battles". Give directions that are important to you and that you are willing to follow through on.

BRINGING IT HOME

Answer the following questions:

Give an example of one activity or a time of the day when it is difficult for children to follow directions:

_____

_____

Why is this activity or time of day difficult?

_____

_____

For the activity or time period you listed, how would you use one or more of the following strategies to make following a direction less difficult for children?

a. Make the direction or transition more fun
b. Tell the child ahead of time what will happen
c. Allow enough time for the child to enjoy activity

_____

_____

How could you use one or more of the following strategies to reduce the number of directions you give during this activity?

a. Give directions only when necessary
b. Offer choices
c. Redirect child to a new activity

_____

_____

IN A NUTSHELL

1. There are many reasons that children may not follow directions. They include:

   a. they don't understand what it means
   b. they don't hear a direction
   c. they don't want to do it
   d. to get extra attention

2. Here are some guidelines for giving directions to young children:

   a. give just one direction at a time
   b. give directions that are short and simple
   c. be specific
   d. state the directions positively
   e. make sure the child is paying attentions to you when you give a direction
   f. give extra assistance, if necessary
   g. tell the child what to do rather than asking

3. It is also important to try to not give too many directions to young children. A few guidelines for decreasing the number of directions you give are:

   a. give directions only when necessary,
   b. offer choices, and
   c. redirect the child to a new activity rather than giving a direction.

4. Directions to end a fun activity or begin an activity that a child dislikes are difficult directions for children to follow. Some things you can try to make them easier are:

   a. make the direction or the transition from one activity to another more fun

   b. give the child a warning when you anticipate a difficult direction or transition

   c. wait until the child finishes or has had plenty of time to enjoy the activity she is involved in before giving a direction.

5. When you give a child a direction, two things can happen. Either he follows it or tries to follow it he refuses or ignores the direction. When he does follow a direction, praise or reward him.

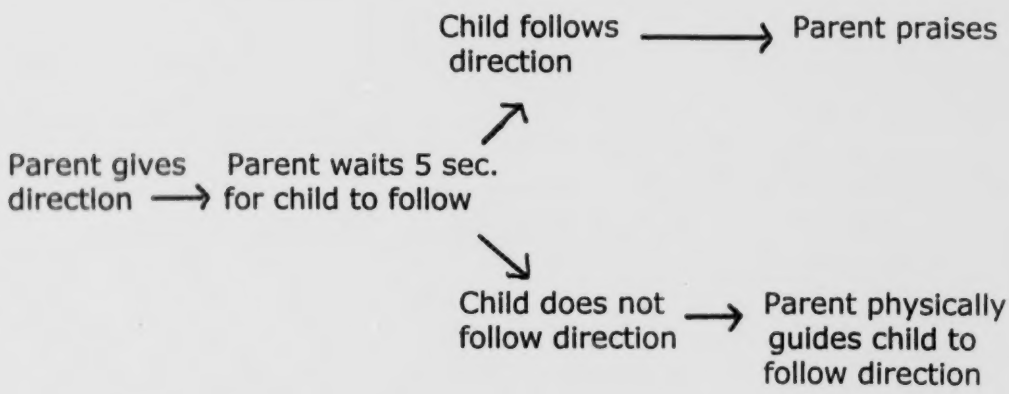
6. Give the child plenty or time (5 seconds) to respond to a direction.

7. If the child does not follow a direction, do not repeat the direction. Instead, physically guide him to complete the direction. This means to gently take his hand and guide him complete the action you have asked him to do.

8. "Pick your battles". In other words, give directions that are important to you and that you are willing to follow through on.

HOW TO TEACH CHILDREN TO FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

(Keep this as a handy reminder for giving directions)


Child follows direction
Parent praises
Parent gives direction
Parent waits 5 sec. for child to follow
Child does not follow direction
Parent physically guides child to follow direction

1. Make the direction or transition fun.
2. Give directions only when needed.
3. Tell, don't ask or suggest.
4. State your direction positively.
5. Make sure the child is attending.
6. Give directions that are short, simple, and specific.
7. Give extra assistance if necessary.
8. Allow enough time (5 sec.) for the child to respond.
9. Give directions only once.
10. Praise the child whenever he follows a direction. Use physical guidance when the child does not follow a direction.

LEAP PRESCHOOL

STAFF SKILL TRAINING PROGRAM

MODULE #3: An Introduction to Reinforcement

Main Ideas

✏Definition of Reinforcement

✏Kinds of Reinforcement

✏Recognition of Individual Differences in What is Reinforcing

✏Things to Remember About When and How Often to Reinforce

✏Necessity of "Catching a Child Being Good"

Introduction

Please refer to Part I of the Activity Sheet on page 10. The sentences in Part I of this activity sheet all have two things in common: 1) each sentence refers to a behavior that someone wants to increase; and 2) each sentence describes a reward for that behavior.

Definition of Positive Reinforcement

A previous packet talked about how consequences can influence whether or not a behavior will continue. We said that if a behavior is followed by a consequence that is pleasant, the behavior will most likely happen more often. Another word for a pleasant consequence is positive reinforcer. A positive reinforcer is any pleasant object or activity that is given to a person following a behavior which increases that behavior. Positive reinforcement is used to increase behavior many times each day. If one of our behaviors is followed by reinforcement, we will continue to do the behavior in the future. For example, if you order a new dessert and it tastes great, you will probably order it again. If you say hello to a neighbor and that person smiles and says hello back, you will most likely greet him again in the future. If you go to work each day and receive a paycheck at the end of the week, chances are you will continue to go to work. A good dessert, a response to a social gathering, and a paycheck are all examples of reinforcers.

Children are also reinforced for their behavior. For example, when an infant is learning to talk, mom or dad will smile, clap, and hug the child for making her first sounds. The child enjoys this reinforcement and continues to make sounds and words. If Katie draws a picture and her teacher says, "That's beautiful" and hangs it in the classroom, Katie will probably continue to make pictures for her teacher. If a teacher claps and says, "Good boy" when Andy throws his garbage away after snack for the first time, there is a good chance that Andy will continue this behavior. Attention and rewards given to a child for a certain behavior will increase the likelihood that the behavior will continue in the future.

Kinds of Reinforcers

Try to list ten objects or activities that could be reinforcers to children. Reinforcers can be grouped into four categories: 1) social reinforcers; 2) material or activity reinforcers; 3) food reinforcers; and 4) token reinforcers. The first type of reinforcer that we have listed is social reinforcers. Social reinforcement includes any kind of personal attention that a person enjoys. Kisses, hugs, and praise are examples of social reinforcement.

The second type is material or activity reinforcers. This includes objects or activities that a person enjoys. A special sticker, listening to a favorite music tape or taking a walk are all examples of material or activity reinforcement.

The next type is food reinforcers. Anything that a person likes to eat or drink can be a food reinforcer. Taking a break for a cup of tea after cleaning the kitchen is one example of a food reinforcer. Food reinforcers for a child may be getting a lollipop for good behavior during a video or getting a cookie for saying or signing "cookie."

The last type of reinforcer is token reinforcers. Token reinforcers are items that can be exchanged for something pleasant at a later time. Token reinforcers are typically used with older children that can wait for a reinforcer and can understand the connection between the token and what they will exchange it for. An example of token reinforcement would be giving a child a star on a chart every time she remembers to clean up toys after herself. when she has earned ten stars she can exchange them for a special prize. Giving a child an allowance for doing a household chore is also an example of token reinforcement. The money can be exchanged later for candy, a video game, or a small toy.

Individual Differences

Many of us have set up "reinforcement plans" for ourselves. Buying a new outfit when you lose weight, taking a long bubble bath after an afternoon of gardening or going out to dinner after painting the bedroom are all examples of how adults motivate themselves to increase a behavior. Let's think about

what is reinforcing to us. In Part II of the Activity Sheet I, write down something that you don't like to do but think you should do more often. Now list some reinforcers that might motivate you to do this behavior more often. Finally, think of something that may be a reward for someone else but is not a reward for you. All of us enjoy different things. What may be reinforcing to one person may not be to someone else. The same is true with children. Watching a Mickey Mouse video may be a terrific reinforcer for Andre, but not very exciting to Cindy. A special snack of peanut butter crackers could be a reinforcer for Marie but not for Jacob who "can't stand peanut butter." For a reinforcer to be effective, that is, for it to increase a behavior, it must be something that the child enjoys.

Another thing to remember about individual differences with reinforcement is that children learn to respond to different reinforcers as they grow and mature. Think about a child as an infant. What things are reinforcers to them then? Would praise be a good reinforcer? Do babies do things just because they were right? As children grow and mature, they learn to take pride in their accomplishments and enjoy pleasing other. So, what is reinforcing to an older child may not be enough of or the right type of reinforcer for a younger child.

When to Reinforce

When you are teaching a new behavior, it is important to reinforce immediately after the behavior. If a child is not reinforced immediately after the behavior, she may become confused and not know why she is being reinforced. When the reinforcer is given immediately, it is easier for her to know which behaviors to continue.

Another reason that reinforcement should be immediate is that delaying the reinforcement may result in accidentally teaching a different behavior. Read this example:

> *Andee was trying to get Wendy to try new snacks. One day at snack, Wendy tried a new snack on her own then sat quietly in her chair. Andee was busy talking. After several minutes, Wendy began to loudly bang her hand on the table. Andee turned to Wendy, noticed that she had eaten all of her snack, and said, "What a good girl."*

a. What behavior was Andee trying to increase?

b. Did Andee praise Wendy immediately after she finished the snack?

c. What behaviors did Andee actually reinforce?

Because Andee's reinforcement was delayed, she accidentally reinforced Wendy for two behaviors: 1) eating her snack; and 2) banging her hand on the table. Andee, without realizing it, may have taught Wendy that if she wants to get praise, she must first get her teacher's attention by banging her hand.

When you first begin to teach a new behavior, reinforce the behavior every time it happens. When a reinforcer is given every time a behavior happens, this is called continuous reinforcement. Here's an example:

Joe was concerned because Manny would often run into the street when heading to the playground. Joe wanted Manny to hold his hand while they walked to the playground. He decided to use a favorite music tape as a reinforcer to teach Manny to hold his hand. Joe explained to Manny that if he held hands while they walked to the playground, he could play the tape while playing outside. Manny held his teacher's hand every day during the first week. During the second week, the tape player broke down, and Joe had no tape player to use. Two weeks passed before the tape player was repaired. During this time, Manny began to run into street again.

a. What behavior was Joe trying to reinforce?

b. What was the reinforcer?

c. Was the plan for change working when Manny was reinforced every day?

d. What happened to Manny's behavior when he did not get reinforced every time?

When Manny was reinforced every day, he quickly learned to hold his teacher's hand. When the reinforcement stopped, however, Manny went back to running into the street. This example points out one of the disadvantages of using continuous reinforcement: although continuous reinforcement is the best way to increase a new behavior, the behavior will quickly disappear when the reinforcer stops.

Let's look at another example of continuous reinforcement.

Ann got annoyed each day time came for clean up in her classroom. Toys were scattered all over the room. Ann decided to hang a chart in the classroom with all of the children's names on it. Children could earn a special sticker next to their name every time they did a good job of cleaning up all of the toys in the class. The sticker chart has worked very well for one month but Ann wonders how long she should continue giving the children the expensive stickers.

a. What do you think might happen if Ann stops giving the children the reinforcement?

b. How could Ann gradually change the way the children earn reinforcement for cleaning the room?

The final goal for reinforcement programs is that the child works just for praise or for self-satisfaction. Although continuous reinforcement is the best way to teach a new behavior, we cannot stop there. Once a child's behavior has increased, it is important that you gradually fade the amount or type of reinforcement you give. Fading the reinforcer means gradually giving less of the reinforcer, as the child gets better at the behavior. In the example with Ann and her class, Ann could begin to give the children the stickers less often or could begin to give stars or checkmarks instead of fancy stickers. Both of these are examples of fading the reinforcer.

When you reinforce occasionally, rather than every time, this is called intermittent reinforcement. Intermittent reinforcement is the best way to strengthen a behavior and have it continue for a long time.

Let's look at some everyday examples of continuous and intermittent reinforcement. Suppose you went on a vacation to Las Vegas and decided to play the slot machines. You put a quarter in the slot machine but do not win any money. Would you put another quarter in? How many quarters would you put in before you would stop? Now you get thirsty and go to a Coke machine. You put your money in and don't get a drink. Would you put more money in? How many times would you try before you would stop?

So when you expect to get reinforced each time, like with the Coke machine, your behavior of putting money in quickly stops when the reinforcement (the Coke) is not received. But, when you don't expect to get reinforced each time, like with the slot machine, your behavior will continue for a longer time.

When to reinforce:

1. Reinforce immediately after the behavior,
2. Reinforce every time when teaching something new,
3. Gradually fade the reinforcer, and
4. Reinforce occasionally to strengthen a behavior.

Catch the Child Being Good

One of the most important things to remember about reinforcement with children is to "catch" them being good. It is so easy to ignore or take good behavior for granted. When a child is being good, it is easy to get busy doing the million other things teachers do each day. However, when we do this we fall into a trap. Children find out that to get the teachers' attention they have to misbehave. It is much more effective to try to prevent the misbehavior by catching children while they are being good and giving them some special attention. Often this can be simply rubbing a child's back, giving one a hug, or showing one a smile. Sometimes you may need to take a break from what you are doing and spend some time playing, talking or doing a special activity with the child. Remember these three things:

a. Catch the children in your classroom being good.

b. Don't take good behavior for granted.

c. Praise the children in your classroom often for good behavior.

Summary

A. Positive reinforcement is any pleasant object or activity that is given to a person following a behavior which increases that behavior.

B. Reinforcers can be grouped into four categories:

1. Social Reinforcement
2. Material or Activity Reinforcement
3. Food Reinforcement
4. Token Reinforcement

C. Here are some things to remember about when to reinforce:

1. Reinforce immediately after the behavior you want to increase,
2. When teaching a new behavior, reinforce the behavior every time it happens,
3. As the child learns the behavior, gradually fade the type or amount of reinforcement you use, and
4. Reinforce occasionally to strengthen a behavior.

D. Catch the children being good. Praise or reinforce good behavior often.

Activity Sheet

PART I:

1. Each month a local nursing home honors a "Volunteer or the Month." Individuals who are nominated are those volunteers who have donated 20 hours or more that month. In addition to being honored at a special luncheon, a picture of the volunteer appears in the agency newsletter.

2. People's Bank advertises that free radios, calculators, and crystal will be given to customers who open savings accounts during the month of October.

3. Every Thursday night, the Oak Table Restaurant has a "Two-for-One" dinner special.

4. A preschool is selling chance tickets. The first prize is an all expense paid weekend for two in Atlantic City.

5. The American Auto Dealership gives their salespeople a 10% commission on each car that they sell.

PART II:

I don't like to _____ but I know I should do it more often.

I might do it more often if:

_____

_____

I don't like _____ but I know that other people do.

Bringing it Home

List a few reinforcers for a child or children that could be used to increase a behavior during each of the following activities. Remember that reinforcers can be social, material or activity, food, or token.

Freeplay: _____
_____
_____

Circle: _____
_____
_____

Centers: _____
_____
_____

Clean Up: _____
_____
_____

Snack: _____
_____
_____

Outside: _____
_____
_____

Other: _____
_____
_____

In a Nutshell

1. Positive reinforcement is defined as any pleasant object or activity that is given to a person following a behavior which increases that behavior.

2. There are many different kinds of reinforcers. They can be grouped into the following categories:

    a) Social Reinforcement
    b) Material or Activity Reinforcement
    c) Food Reinforcement
    d) Token Reinforcement

3. Social Reinforcement includes any kind of personal attention that a person enjoys. Kisses, hugs, and praise are examples of social reinforcement.

4. Material or activity reinforcement includes objects or activities that a person enjoys. A favorite toy or a shiny penny could be used as material reinforcers. A trip to the zoo or a special story are examples of activity reinforcement.

5. Examples of food reinforcers could include raisins, juice, cookies, or grapes. When using food reinforcers, remember:

    a) use nutritious foods if possible,
    b) give small amounts (e.g., a morsel of the cookie)
    c) children will tire of food or drinks if they are used as reinforcers too often.

6. Token reinforcement means reinforcing a child with an item that can be exchanged for something pleasant at a later time. Examples of token reinforcement include a) stars, checkmarks or stickers on a chart that when saved up, can be exchanged for a special prize or b) pennies that can be exchanged for a special treat at the end of the day. Remember that a child must be able to wait for reinforcement for a token reinforcer to be effective. Some young children or children with developmental delays may not understand the connection between the token and the reinforcement that comes much later.

7. Here are some things to remember about <u>when to reinforce</u>:

   a) It is important to <u>reinforce immediately</u> after the behavior you are trying to increase.

   b) When you first begin to teach a new behavior, reinforce the behavior every time it happens. This is called <u>continuous reinforcement</u>.

   c) Although continuous reinforcement is the best way to teach a new behavior, the behavior will quickly stop when the reinforcer is discontinued.

   d) Once a child's behavior has increased, it is important to <u>gradually fade the amount or type of reinforcement you give</u>.

   e) When you reinforce occasionally, rather than every time, this is called <u>intermittent reinforcement</u>. Intermittent reinforcement is the best way to strengthen a behavior and have it continue for a long time.

8. <u>Catch the children being good</u>. Don't take good behavior for granted. Praise or reinforce all of the children in your classroom often for good behavior.

LEAP PRESCHOOL

STAFF SKILL TRAINING PROGRAM

MODULE #4: How to Use Reinforcement with Children

Main Ideas

- How to Use Praise Effectively
- Rewarding Small Steps
- Natural Reinforcement
- Considerations When Selecting Reinforcers

INTRODUCTION

Reinforcement is defined as any pleasant object or activity that is given to a person after a behavior which increases that behavior. Increasing a behavior means that the behavior is likely to a) happen more often, b) happen for a longer period of time, and c) improve in quality. Today we are going to talk about some specific suggestions for using reinforcement with children.

SOCIAL REINFORCEMENT

Social reinforcement is any type of personal attention that someone enjoys. Social reinforcement includes hugs, high fives, and praise. All of these are easy and fun to give and cost nothing. Children enjoy attention and praise and will often continue to do a behavior that results in attention from adults. Praise is a common and important social reinforcer.

Since praise is such an important reinforcer, let's spend some time talking about good ways to use praise. One important thing to remember about using praise with children is to be specific. Read these two statements:

a) "Thanks Bobby."
b) "Thanks for putting the puzzles away."

Which statement would mean more to Bobby? When you use specific praise to reinforce a child, he will know what he did that pleased you. He will also know what behavior to continue in the future to get your positive attention.

Another thing to remember when using praise with children is to be enthusiastic. A child may not be reinforced if he is praised sarcastically or in a monotone. Your tone of voice and facial expression should reflect your pleasure with the child's behavior. Your facial expression and enthusiastic praise is especially important if the child is very young or if the child may not understand the words in your praise statement.

Make sure the child is listening when you praise her. When you can, get down to the child's level and look right at her. Make sure the child sees your smile because this, again, will help her understand that you are pleased.

As adults, we may want children to learn to be reinforced by praise alone, but many young children or children with developmental delays may not initially recognize praise as reinforcing. One way to teach children to respond to praise alone is to initially praise them as you give them some other reinforcer. Here are some examples"

a) Mrs. L. gives Lisa a pat on the back and says "Nice talking" when Lisa says "hi" to her friend.

b) Ms. B. claps her hands as she tells Gina "You did it! You took your coat off all by yourself"

c) At snack, Jared sits down at the table without any further prompting by the teacher. The teacher gives him the snack and says "Thanks for coming over to the snack table and sitting down."

Tickling, hugging, "piggy back" rides, back rubs, clapping hands, and "give me five" are examples of social reinforcers that could be paired with praise. If you can, pair the praise with another social reinforcement before trying more tangible reinforcers. However, if needed, praise can be paired with any reinforcer; food, material or activity, social or token. Remember to gradually fade the extra reinforcer to teach your child to respond to praise of attention alone.

As children grow and mature, they learn to take pride in their own accomplishments and enjoy pleasing other people who are important to them. As children reach this stage and begin to understand more, teachers can begin to use encouraging statements that focus less on the specific behavior and more on how the child and teacher feel. Encouragement can be given for effort and improvement and helps the child feel proud of his abilities. Here are examples of encouragement statements:

1. "You must be proud of yourself."
2. "I can see you really worked hard on that."
3. "I'm glad you're having fun."

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USING REINFORCEMENT NATURALLY

When you need to use a reinforcer other than social, it is a good idea to think of a way to use it in a natural situation. Here is an example:

> *Ms. D. was trying to teach one of her students, Taylor, to take off his gloves, hat, boots, and coat when class came in from the playground. She knows that the most reinforcing things for Taylor are candy, playing with puzzles, and looking at books. Rather than giving Taylor an M&M for each piece of clothing he takes off, Ms. D. thought a puzzle would be more reinforcing because free play follow outside time. She put aside a special puzzle which Taylor enjoys and brings it out along with the box. She hands him the box lid, and each time he removes his coat, gloves, hat and boots, she gives him a piece of the puzzle. As soon as all of his outside clothes are removed, she gives him the rest of the puzzle and he can take it and put it together during free play.*

The reinforcer that Ms. D. chose is directly related to the behavior she is reinforcing. A natural reinforcer, as in this example, is the way people will respond to a child in everyday life. If a child says "Daddy" for the first time, it is more natural for Daddy to give him a hug or play a tickling game then to give him a sticker or a grape.

Another way to use reinforcement naturally is to use pleasant, routine activities to motivate the child to do something he enjoys. One way to do this is to use "Grandma's Rule". This rule states "You do what I want you to do, then you can do what you want to do". Here are two examples;

a) "Let me tie your shoes, and then you can go out to the playground" (Rather "You can't go out to play if you won't let me tie your shoes"

b) "Go to the quiet area and then I'll read you a story" (Rather than "No story if you won't go to the quiet area.")

*** *Grandma's Rule helps us to use positive rather than negative statements to motivate children.*

REWARDING SMALL STEPS

It is important to reinforce the child for small steps of improvement rather than setting a goal that is too difficult. Here is an example:

> *Everyday after circle was finished, Mrs. K. needed each child to wait for his name to be called, come to the front of circle, take his name tag, and tell Mrs. K. where he was going to play for center time. Aaron would refuse to do this at every circle time, laying on the floor and making it hard for the assistant to guide him over to the front of the circle. Mrs. K. needed a plan for change, so she decided to give Aaron stickers of his favorite cartoon character for cooperating at the end of circle time. On the first day, Aaron got up, walked to the front of the circle, took his name, but then dropped it and laid down on the floor. The second day, Aaron got up, went to the front of the circle, but then began running around the room before taking his name. On the third day, he tantrummed when Mrs. K. asked him to come up. Aaron never received a sticker.*

Mrs. K. was asking Aaron to change too many behaviors for one small reinforcer. Requiring a drastic change in behavior to receive a small reinforcer may not be effective. In other words, reward for small steps of improvement.

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING A REINFORCER

When you have decided that social reinforcement alone is not enough to motivate the child to increase a certain behavior, it's time to think about what other reinforcement could be used. Certainly, you'll want to choose something that you know the child enjoys, but there are some other things to consider. For one thing, reinforcement should be convenient and not disruptive to the classroom routine. Giving the child the job of line leader everyday in which he cleans up before going outside may not be fair to the other children. If it is difficult to give the reinforcement you choose, you may find yourself skipping it, or promising to give it later which could be less effective. The reinforcer you

choose should not lead to disruptive behavior. Here is an example:

> *Tyrone's teacher, Ms. H. wanted to increase his appropriate behavior during clean up. She decided to let him help the assistant take the bikes outside before the rest of the kids came out. However, when they started to push the bikes out, Tyrone would start running toward the playground and would leave the bike behind. The assistant would try to call him back over, but he would not listen and she would have to bring him back causing him to throw a tantrum.*

This is an example of a reinforcer that leads to a disruptive behavior. Using a noisy toy as a reinforcer then asking your child to play quietly because the room is getting too noisy would be another example.

It is also important, when you plan to use a special reinforcer, that is not available at other times during the everyday classroom routine. Using chocolate pudding at snack as a reinforcer is not a possibility everyday. When you plan to use a special reinforcer to increase the child's behavior, talk to other caregivers to make sure they know not to offer the same thing.

A reinforcer should only be given if the child does the behavior. Here is an example:

> *Sammy's teachers were working on teaching him to communicate by showing them pictures. Since he had a special puzzle he enjoyed, they put a picture of it in his communication book and had the puzzle hidden in a cupboard at school. When Sammy banged on the cupboard door to indicate he wanted the puzzle, his teacher showed him the book. If Sammy did not indicated the correct picture, his teacher would still give him the puzzle.*

Sammy got the reinforcer, whether or not he showed his teachers the correct picture. He may not be motivated to use pictures to communicate if he knows he'll get the puzzle anyway. You must be willing to physically help the child do the behavior or to withhold the reinforcer you choose when the child does not do the desired behavior.

Another important thing about choosing a reinforcer is to change the reinforcer or vary it so that a child does not get tired of it. If you decide to use the child's favorite book as a reinforcer for sitting on the potty, keep in mind that after a few times "The Cat in the Hat" may no longer be that child's favorite book. He may be bored with it. If you are aware that a reinforcer is becoming less motivating, you can either pick a new reinforcer, for example a small toy, or you can vary the reinforcer, (i.e. in other words, try a different book). Sometimes the person giving the reinforcer may also get bored or tired of it and begin to be less enthusiastic in giving it. This would be another time to think about changing or varying the reinforcer.

Finally, when you give a child a special reinforcer, try to give only the amount needed. For example, if an inexpensive matchbox car is motivating the child, don't use a more expensive, larger toy car. Also, if you decide to use a food reinforcer such as animal crackers, use one or two crackers rather than the whole box. If you use too much of the same reinforcer, the child will get tired of it.

SUMMARY

A. When you use praise with a child:

1. be specific,
2. be enthusiastic,
3. make sure he is listening,
4. when necessary, pair praise with another reinforcer, and
5. begin to use encouragement statements as the child matures and is able to understand more

B. When you use a reinforcer other than praise, use it in a natural situation.

C. Reinforce a child for small steps of improvement rather than setting a goal that is so difficult that she has little chance to earn the reinforcement.

D. Choose a reinforcement that:
1. is convenient and not disruptive to your routine,
2. does not lead to disruptive behavior,
3. is not available at other times, and
4. you are willing to not give in if the behavior does not occur.

BRINGING IT HOME

Fill in the answers for the following statements:

One behavior that I would like a child in my classroom to increase is:

_____

_____

Here is an example of how I could be specific when praising this child for this behavior:

_____

_____

I think that just praise will be motivating enough to increase this behavior:

__ Yes
__ No

If no..... I will try to pair the praise with the following reinforcer:

_____

_____

Will this reinforcer....

Be convenient?	__ Yes	__ No
Be disruptive to daily rountine?	__ Yes	__ No
Lead to disruptive behavior?	__ Yes	__ No
Available at other times?	__ Yes	__ No

If I need to change or vary the reinforcer because the child gets tired of it, here's what I could try:

_____

IN A NUTSHELL

1. Social reinforcment is any type of personal attention that a person enjoys. Praise is a common and important social reinforcer.

2. To praise most effectively, remember to:

    a. be specific
    b. be enthusiastic
    c. make sure your child is listening
    d. pair praise with other reinforcers if praise alone is not effective
    e. begin to use encouraging statements as the child matures and is able to understand more

3. When you need to use a reinforcer other than social, try to use it in a natural situation. For example, if you want to use a food reinforcer to teach colors, you could use jellybeans, M&M's, or other colored foods. Ask the child what color the food is, then give it to him for a correct answer.

4. Use Grandma's rule to motivate children in a positive way. Grandma's rule states "You do what I want you to do, then you can do what you want to do". Grandma's rule uses activities or materials that the child enjoys to reinforce behaviors that the child does not enjoy. An example of Grandma's rule is "Pick up the puzzles, then we can paint".

5. Reinforce the child for small steps of improvement. Do not require a drastic change in behavior for a child to earn a reinforcer.

6. Here are some things to consider when using a reinforcer other than social reinforcement. The reinforcer should:

    a. be convenient and not disruptive to your daily routine,
    b. not lead to disruptive behavior,
    c. not be available at other times,
    d. be given only when the child has done the behavior,
    e. be changed or varied if the child gets bored with it, and
    f. be given in small amounts.

Token Reinforcement
Information Sheet and Guidelines

What is Token Reinforcement?
Token reinforcement is a way to motivate children to increase good behavior. The child is given a chance to earn "tokens" for good behavior or for completing a task. Tokens can be any type of object or symbol. Some examples are:

plastic chips
stars
stamps
points
check marks
stickers
happy faces
play money
links in a chain
etc.

When the child earns enough tokens, she can exchange them for a reward. Here are some examples:

Greg gets a star on a chart each day that he keeps his hands to himself during circle. At the end of the week, if he has 5 stars, he can go for a walk alone with his favorite teacher.

Shaneen earns one token for each time she cleans up after herself, each time she shares with a friend, and each time she follows teacher directions without an argument. If she earns at least 4 tokens in the morning, she can either have a fancy sticker, wear her favorite jewelry from dress up area, or be the line leader for the class at the end of the day.

Step by step:

Here are the steps to follow when planning a token reinforcement system for a child:

1. Decide what behavior you would like the child to increase. Remember that with young children it is best to focus on only one or two behaviors at a time. To decrease an undesirable behavior, think about what desirable behavior you would like the child to do in it's place. For example, if your child cries and refuses to sit in circle, you would like to increase the number of times she sits in circle quietly/attentively.

2. Decide what to use for tokens. A variety of different objects or symbols can be used as tokens. Tokens should be easily accessible to you but not available to the child form other sources. Tokens should be safe and durable.

3. Decide on rewards for which tokens can be exchanged. A variety of different rewards can be offered for which the tokens the child earns can be exchanged. Some examples would include special time with a favorite teacher, a special job/helper assignment, or a small toy/sticker/hand stamp. Provide the child with a few choices if possible. The reward should be motivating to the child and only available when the child has enough tokens to "cash in."

4. Decide how often and when the child can exchange tokens for rewards. It is a good idea with young children to have a time for them to exchange tokens every day. Older children may be able to save tokens for a few days or a week. When a token system is set up for a very specific period of time, try to allow time for the child to exchange the tokens for the reward immediately following the activity. For example, if the child is

earning tokens for his behavior ONLY while in circle, it may be a good idea for him to be able to exchange the tokens during or immediately following circle.

Another way to set up a token system is to allow the child to exchange the tokens as soon as he gets a certain number. For example, "Sara can get a sticker as soon as she earns 4 tokens." This will only work if the rewards are objects or events that can be given at any time of the day. If the reward is a walk with the teacher and the child earns the right number of tokens at very the end of the day, he would not be able to immediately exchange the tokens for the reward.

5. Estimate the number of tokens the child could currently earn in that time period. If you think the child could currently earn five tokens, begin with that requirement. This will make it more likely that the child will be successful right from the beginning.

If you are setting up the token system so that the child can exchange the tokens as soon as he earns enough, estimate how many tokens he can earn and how long he will be able to wait for the reward. If it would take him tow weeks to earn the number of tokens you specify, he may lose interest in the token system before he gets a chance to exchange the tokens for rewards. It may be more effective to require fewer tokens so that he can earn enough tokens to exchange for a reward in one or two days.

Kayla's teachers were frustrated. Whenever they would tell Kayla it was time to switch activities, she would scream, "No" and begin to cry. This would happen when it was time to find a seat at the table for snack, when it was time to put toys away and eat dinner, when it was time to go to the bathroom and many other times each day. They decided to try a "smiley face" chart. On the top of a piece of paper they wrote "OK." They divided the paper into six squares. They then explained to Kayla that if she said "OK" and did what she was asked to do, she would get a smiley face drawn in one of the squares. When she got all six squares, she could pick a prize. A prize could be to obtain a special prize, special time with a teacher, or a special job.

Following the five steps outlined above, answer the following questions:

1. What behavior did her parents want Kayla to increase?

2. What are her parents going to use for tokens?

3. What rewards will Kayla be able to exchange the tokens for?

4. When will Kayla exchange the tokens?

5. How many tokens does Kayla need to earn to get a reward?

Some other Guidelines:

1. Token reinforcement systems should be used only if your child is able to understand the idea of exchanging tokens for rewards. Very young children and children with developmental delays may not be able to wait a long period of time to earn enough tokens to exchange for the reward.

2. Make the token system as visually concrete as possible. A system of tokens or a chart that the child can look at be able to get an idea of how close he is to having enough tokens is very effective. Here are two examples:

Rebecca has a sign on the wall that says, "TICKLE." Each time she comes when a teacher calls her, she gets to color a letter in on the sign. At the end of the day, if she has the whole word filled in, she can have a tickle session with the teacher of her choice.

There is a hook on the wall of the classroom. Every time Barrett goes to the potty, he earns a link of chain. He connects the links and hangs the chain on the wall. When the chain is long enough to touch the floor, Barrett can exchange the chain for a new matchbox car.

3. Explain the token system to the child. Explain to the child how she can earn tokens, what rewards the tokens can be exchanges for and when she can exchange the tokens for rewards. If possible, get your child's input into the types of rewards to use.

4. Gradually fade the token reinforcement system. Gradually increase the amount of the behavior you require before giving a token. Also, increase the delays between earning the tokens and the time to exchange them for rewards. Once you begin to fade the token system, substitute praise and other social reinforcement for the tokens.

HOW AND WHEN TO USE POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

1) Use positive reinforcement to increase a behavior.

2) Reward small steps.

3) Considerations when selecting reinforcers.

4) Reinforce immediately after the behavior has occurred.

5) Use continuous reinforcement when teaching a new behavior.

6) When a behavior is stable and consistent, gradually fade continuous reinforcement to intermittent reinforcement.

7) Use intermittent reinforcement to maintain a behavior.

8) Catch your child being good!

Reinforcement is...any pleasant object or event that is given to a person during or after a behavior which increases that behavior.

Types of Reinforcement

1. Social
2. Material/Activity
3. Food
4. Token

Remember.....

Be specific.....Be enthusiastic.....Be positive.....Reward small steps.

Reinforce immediately following the behavior you want to increase.

When using reinforcement other than praise....gradually fade.

Catch the child being good.

A SAMPLE OF REINFORCERS

There are lots of other kinds of reinforcers other than praise. Identify the activities/objects/social actions that are reinforcers for the child with whom you are working. Here are some examples:

Social Activity	Concrete Activity	Rewarding Statement
Physical (hug, pat)	Toys	"Good, you followed my directions"
Smile	Stamp on hand	"You should be proud, pulling your pants up by yourself!"
Helping the teacher	Stickers	"WOW! Those colors are beautiful!"
Calling/writing parents	Food or special treat	"That's it, you put the puzzle together"
Clapping	Badge of Honor	"Thanks for cleaning up your blocks."
Going to the head of the line	Going on a field trip	

CAN YOU THINK OF SOME OTHERS?

DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT OF OTHER BEHAVIOR (DRO)

This is a procedure in which the child is reinforced for the absence of misbehavior. The child is reinforced following a performance of appropriate behavior.

DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT

Two Types:

Individual: Reinforce a child only after an appropriate behavior

Group: Reinforce children in the group who are appropriate. The children who are inappropriate will observe appropriate behavior.

LEAP PRESCHOOL

STAFF SKILL TRAINING PROGRAM

MODULE #5: Planning Activities to Increase Desired Behaviors

Main Ideas

- Planning Activities that are Enjoyable and Appropriate
- Anticipating Problems During Activities
- Controlling Materials
- Scheduling Activities
- Establishing Reinforcement Plans, Rules and Consequences During Activities

INTRODUCTION

Teachers dread certain times of the day or certain activities because some children do not always behave well during them. In this packet we will be talking about how to plan for these times to make them easier and more enjoyable for everyone.

ANTICIPATE PROBLEMS

The first thing that is important in planning for certain activities is to anticipate problems. This step is usually easy for teachers. You can often predict very accurately if children will behave during certain activities and which activities are likely to be difficult. Sometimes you can anticipate problems because of a child's behavior during the same activity or a similar activity in the past. Other activities that may be difficult are those that happen infrequently, such as a field trip. And, sometimes you can anticipate that an activity will be difficult if it occurs during a time of day when a child may be tired.

Once you have thought about an activity or a time or day that you would like to plan for, it may be helpful to think about what you would like a child to be doing during this time and some of the undesirable behaviors that may come up. Here is an example:

> *On the last field trip to the zoo that Ms. B. took her class on, Keith had much difficult during the times when he had to sit patiently, such as on the bus, when waiting in line for tickets, and at the end of lunch when Keith had to wait until everyone was finished before continuing through the zoo. He had trouble staying in his seat on the bus, and he was running around when he had to wait after lunch.*

Thinking about what you would like a child to be doing and what some of the problems may be will help you with thorough planning for the activity.

KEEP CHILDREN BUSY OR ENTERTAINED

Another way to encourage desired behavior during an activity is to think about ways to keep children busy or entertained. Here is an example:

> *Ms. B. has quite a few ideas for helping the keep Keith and other children who are waiting busy during the field trip. For the bus trip, she has chosen several of Keith's favorite songs to sing along with some finger plays the children can do. To help him while waiting for the others after lunch, she has packed a small backpack with some new small puzzles and pictures to color that Keith and other children who are finished can play with at their tables. She also has an assistant that can take Keith on a short walk while he is waiting on the others.*

This teacher has thought of several ways to keep Keith and other children busy during the down time they will encounter on their next field trip to the zoo. These ideas can be used in may situations. One thing to think about is how to make the time or activity more fun. For example, if the activity is waiting in line to get tickets, you may be able to think of a game to play while you are waiting . Counting cars, finding colors (i.e. the "I see something you don't see..." game) or singing songs may help pass the time.

You may also be able to make the activity more fun by involving the child in the activity. When a child is not involved in the activity, the boredom may result in undesirable behaviors. Involving a child in the activity also helps her begin to learn what is expected of her in that situation.

When an activity involves some waiting, like in the example of the field trip to the zoo, you may need to bring some things with you to keep children entertained. It may be helpful if these materials are new and are not ones that the child has already been exposed to. In other words, save that object or toy for special occasions when you know that a particular activity may be difficult.

Finally, when an activity or time of day is consistently difficult, you may want to set aside special items or snacks that you use just for that activity. These toys should be toys that the child is familiar with, can do by himself, and are "special" enough that he will spend some time with them.

CONTROL MATERIALS

When you take toys, snacks, or books along on a field trip, another thing to plan to increase desired behavior is how to keep some control over the materials. One way to control materials is to control how quickly children use the materials you bring along. You can do this by giving just one item at a time to the child so that he is not tired of all that you have brought in just a short period of time. Another idea to help control materials is to make sure one thing is put away before getting the next one out. Young children have a difficult time planning activities and can easily become overwhelmed when there are too many things to choose from. When each item is put away before getting another one out, the materials remain organized and children can spend more

time with one toy without being distracted by other materials that are within sight. It is surprising how toys can be "rediscovered" when they are organized in a new way.

Keeping some toys out of reach can also eliminate the problem of children constantly wanting to change toys. Toys with many small parts, toys that need adult supervision and toys that a child has a difficult time sharing with others in the classroom can be placed on a high shelf or in a cupboard until a time when you have a chance to more closely oversee this child with the toy. Keeping certain toys out of reach can also limit the amount of time a child spends with a certain toy. When children are overwhelmed by the number of toys available to them, many teachers put some of the toys away in a closet for a few weeks then switch toys. Suddenly, all of those old toys seem new and interesting.

It is also important when you are planning materials for a certain activity, and you are going to be very busy in the classroom, make sure you select toys or objects that don't encourage undesirable behavior. This may be helpful when you know you will not have time to be teaching the appropriate way to play with toys or responding to undesirable behaviors.

PLAN APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

When you are planning an activity for your class, think about if the activity and the length of the activity are appropriate for all of the children in the classroom. For example, when planning an event such as a field trip, it is important to anticipate the length of the trip, how much time will involve waiting, and whether or not it is appropriate for all children in the classroom. If you aren't sure what may be appropriate for a particular child, ask the parents for their opinion on how the child will enjoy this particular trip.

Sometimes you can break up activities so that a long activity is easier for a child. Half way through a long trip through a museum, you can give the children a chance to stop for a snack. There may also be activities you would like the entire class to be involved with that are simply not a good match for a particular child. A child with a very short attention span may have a difficult time during story hour at the library. When you plan activities, there are several things to consider. Plan activities for a child based on his age, interests, and abilities. Sometimes you might need to consider the importance of an activity to all of the children's social and cognitive growth. For example, if there are several children in your class who prefer playing alone, you may decide to plan activities in which all children are involved in social or play activities to develop better social skills.

SCHEDULING ACTIVITIES

If you want to plan a special activity and there is a child in your classroom who presents challenging behaviors, there are several things you may want to consider. The first thing, if possible, is to plan an activity for a time of day when the undesirable behaviors are less likely to occur. If a child or several children seem to have more problem behaviors at the end of the day as opposed to the beginning, you may want to plan for a special activity to occur first thing.

MODEL AND REWARD DESIRED BEHAVIOR

One of the most important things to remember when planning a difficult activity is to frequently reward a child when he does what you want him to do. Look at the following example:

> *Periodically throughout the field trip, Ms. B. will pull out a stamper or stickers from her pocket when the children are doing a good job with following directions and staying with the group. She will stamp a child's hand or let them pick a sticker to put on their shirt when they are doing a good job. She will also frequently praise the children for good behavior throughout the trip.*

Catch the child being good. That is what Ms. B. is doing in this example. Try to reward for good behavior more often than you respond to undesirable behaviors. Also, try to start off on a positive note. In other words, begin to reward a child for good behavior before the undesirable behavior happens.

You may be able to reinforce other children's behavior or use them as models for desired behavior during a certain activity. When a child hears or

sees another child get reinforced for a certain behavior, she may try to get the same reinforcement by imitating the desired behavior. A teacher may say to a child "Thanks for putting that toy away". This would work as a reinforcer for another child to put his toys away when it is time to clean up.

You may also want to use Grandma's Rule as part of the activity. This rule states "You do what I want you to do, then you can do what you want to do". For example, you may say to a child "When you put your shoes on, we can go outside and play." Remember to consider a child's ability to understand this type of statement and how long a child could wait for the reinforcement when planning the activity. Remember to plan ahead. Don't wait until the undesirable behaviors happen before you begin to use "Grandma's Rule".

ESTABLISH CLEAR RULES AND CONSEQUENCES

Look at the following example:

> *At the beginning of the field trip and periodically throughout the trip, Ms. B. reminds the children of two important rules when walking through the zoo. One is to stay with the group and the other is to always hold your partner's hand.*

It is important during difficult activities that children know what is expected of them. Establishing clear rules and explaining them to children in simple, positive terms will help children understand what you want them to do. For example, if a child has a tendency to run ahead of the group when on a field trip, the "rule" might be "Hold your buddy's hand" rather than "no running".

This is stated positively so that the child knows what is expected of him and is not reminded of the undesirable behavior. Be sure to state the rules as the activity begins.

Rules that you set for children should be stated as concretely as possible. Telling a four year old that clean up time is in a half an hour may be less clear than saying "When the lights go off it will be time to clean up". Telling a child to "stay close to me" at the playground may not be as clear as saying something like "stay inside the fence or stay on this side of the swings". Another example of concrete rules would be to set a timer to let children know when it is time for snack. Concrete objects or events such as obvious endings to activities, physical boundaries, or a bell ringing can help clarify rules for children.

It is a good idea to give a child periodic reminders of what you would like her to be doing. The easiest way to do this is by restating the "rule" while reinforcing her. For example you may say "thanks for remember to hold my hand."

The number of "rules" for a particular activity should be small so that children can easily remember them and are not overwhelmed. One to three "rules" is a reasonable number for a young child.

CONCLUSION

These simple strategies may be helpful when you are planning activities for a child. Sometimes five or ten minutes worth of planning can help make a difficult activity more enjoyable for both you and the children.

SUMMARY

A. Planning for activities that have been difficult in the past may make them easier and more enjoyable for everyone.

B. When you anticipate that there may be problems during a certain activity you can encourage more desired behavior by:

1. planning alternative activities to make the activity more fun and involve the child in the activity,
2. controlling materials
3. planning activities that are appropriate for the child's age, interests and abilities
4. scheduling activities at times of the day when undesirable behaviors are less likely to occur
5. modeling and rewarding desired behavior often, and
6. establishing clear rules and consequences

BRINGING IT HOME

Think about an activity or time of day that is difficult for a child. Plan for this activity using the following chart:

ACTIVITY	
ANTICIPATE PROBLEMS -List what you would like the child to be doing -List possible undesirable behaviors that may occur during an activity	
PLAN ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES -Make activity more fun -Involve child in activity -Bring toys or snacks along -Set aside special items	
CONTROL MATERIALS -Control how quickly materials are used -Put away things as they are used -Keep some things out of reach -Childproof	
PLAN APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES -Break up long activities	
SCHEDULING ACTIVITIES -Schedule at times of day when undesirable behaviors are less likely to occur -Schedule at consistent and routine times	
MODEL AND REWARD DESIRED BEHAVIORS -Catch the child being good -Reinforce other children -use Grandma's Rule	
ESTABLISH CLEAR RULES AND CONSEQUENCES -State positively -State concretely -Give reminders -Keep number of rules small	

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IN A NUTSHELL

A. Planning for activities that have been difficult in the past may make them easier and more enjoyable for everyone.

B. When you anticipate that there may be problems during a certain activity you can encourage more desired behavior by:

1. planning alternative activities to make the activity more fun and involve the child in the activity,
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LEAP PRESCHOOL

STAFF SKILL TRAINING PROGRAM

MODULE #6: Responding to Children's Undesirable Behaviors

Main Ideas

- Why Children Continue Undesirable Behaviors
- Ways to Respond to Undesirable Behaviors
- Deciding Which Strategy to Use

INTRODUCTION

"I wish this child would stop doing that". You have probably said that about one (or more) of a child's behaviors. Screaming, whining, hand-waving, and hitting are all examples of behaviors that teachers would like children to stop, or at least do less often. Professionals often refer to these behaviors as inappropriate, undesirable, or problem behaviors. It doesn't matter, all you know is you want them to stop. There are four types of behaviors that parents and teachers are typically concerned about. These are: 1) a behavior that is dangerous or may result in the child hurting himself or others , 2) a behavior that may result in objects, toys, furniture, or other materials being damaged or destroyed, 3) a behavior that interferes with the child or another person's learning, and 4) a behavior that is annoying or disruptive to the parent or other people. In this packet we will be discussing ways to respond to behaviors such as these.

"WHY DOES THIS CHILD DO THAT?"

Think about something that a particular child does that you don't like. Can you remember the very first time it happened? Chances are that you can't. Why did this child do it that very first time? There are a lot of reasons a child might "try out" a new behavior. Sometimes it's just an accident, like dropping an egg on the floor. Or, out of frustration, a child may throw the pieces of a puzzle. A child with limited language may cry when he wants a certain toy. A

child that is not paying attention, may walk into the street. Children are active learners. They learn through play, exploration, and interactions with people. In the process, they try a lot of things. When a child does one of these behaviors that first time, whether through frustration, an accident, play, exploration, or communication, we probably don't consider it a problem. It's when it starts happening over and over that parents become frustrated and begin to wonder how to get it to stop. So if the first question was "Why did this child do that in the first place?", the next question would be "Why does this child continue to do it?"

Usually what happens right after a behavior (the consequence) will determine if the behavior continues or increases in the future. Children continue behaviors because of what happened when they tried it in the past. A child who drops an egg on the floor may like that squishy sound. Seeing that slimy colorful egg on the floor may make him want to try it again. A child who absent mindedly walks into the street may enjoy the attention he receives from his mother and the next door neighbor as they come running to get him. In other words, the child receives some kind of reinforcement for the behavior he tries, so he continues to do it.

Although it is not always a simple task, it is important to try to figure out what is reinforcing the behavior. If we can determine what is rewarding the behavior, it will be easier to decide how to respond to the behavior in the

future. Here are a few descriptions of children; see if you can identify reinforcers that cause behaviors to continue.

1. *Nathan's teacher was getting some materials together for circle time. Nathan wanted her to play a game of ball with him and kept repeating over and over "play ball, play ball, play ball". This repetition began to annoy the teacher so she stopped getting ready for circle and played ball with Nathan.*

Ask yourself the following questions:

a) What do you think the teacher would like Nathan to stop doing or do less often?

b) What was happening when Nathan started to repeat "play ball"? What was the antecedent?

c) What happened after Nathan repeated "play ball"? What was the consequence?

In this example, the teacher gave Nathan attention when he repeated "play ball" over and over. So one type of reinforcer that may cause a behavior to continue is attention. Here is another example:

2. *During free play time, the cookies for snack were sitting out on a tray. Andy asked for a cookie from the teacher. His teacher said "Andy, you can't have a cookie now. You'll have to wait for snack." Andy asked for it again and again and began to cry and whine. The teacher wanted some peace and quiet so she said "Ok, you can have one now."*

a) What do you think the teacher would like Andy to stop doing or do less often?

b) What was happening when Andy began to whine and cry? What was the antecedent?

c) What happened following the whining and crying? What was the consequence?

Andy's whining and crying was followed by his teacher giving him a cookie. Receiving a reward following a behavior may cause the behavior to continue. Read the next example:

3. *Emily hated going to circle time and would often run from the circle and would kick and scream when the teachers brought her over to the circle area. Sometimes when she began to tantrum around circle time, her teacher would decide not to make her stay and she would be free to walk around the room while the other children were in circle time.*

a) What do you think Emily's teacher would like her to stop doing or do less often?

b) What would happen before the kicking and screaming? What was the antecedent?

c) What would her teacher sometimes do when she began kicking and screaming in circle? What was the consequence?

In this example, the behavior of kicking and screaming will probably continue because Emily is sometimes getting out of doing something she dislikes. Another reinforcer that causes behaviors to continue is getting out of something unpleasant or escaping from a task. Read the last example:

4. *Wyatt would often lie on the floor during free play time and roll a car in front of his eyes. He enjoyed watching the wheels spin. The behavior occurred when his teachers were nearby and when they were not near him.*

a) What do you think Wyatt's teachers would like him to stop doing or do less often?

b) What is happening when Wyatt rolls the car in front of his eyes?

c) What is reinforcing about this activity? What is the consequence?

The consequence in this example is the activity itself. The activity of watching the wheels spin is reinforcing to Wyatt. The activity is self reinforcing. Many children are soothed or comforted by self reinforcing behaviors such as thumb sucking, nail biting, or twirling hair with fingers. Some children's self reinforcing behaviors are less common such as head banging, hand washing, or finger flicking. Teachers may want the child to stop the behaviors or do them less often when they begin to interfere with learning opportunities, or when the child is actually hurting himself. Other types of self reinforcing activities may include coloring on the wall or noisily bouncing a ball against a door.

REINFORCE TO INCREASE DESIRED BEHAVIOR

For every behavior you would like a child to do less often, there is a desired behavior to take its place. For example, if you would like a child to stop throwing toys, you would probably like to replace that behavior with playing appropriately with toys or putting them away quietly. Whenever you identify a behavior you would like to do less often, think about what you can begin to reward or teach that will take its place.

Sometimes the only plan for change for a behavior you would like to decrease will be to teach your child how to do a skill or communicate a need. Let's look back at the examples:

a) In example #1, Nathan's teacher could reinforce other behaviors such as asking only one time to play ball, waiting for attention, or

independent play.

b) In example #2, Andy's teacher could reinforce getting involved in free play, interacting with peers, or other appropriate behavior instead of reinforcing whining for a cookie.

c) In example #3, Emily's teacher could have reinforced coming over to circle, sitting in circle, and participating in the activities instead of reinforcing kicking and screaming in circle.

d) In example #4, Wyatt's teacher could have reinforced sitting while playing with the cars, or pushing the car to the teacher or another peer.

You can either wait until the desired behavior happens to give attention or a reinforcer, or you can actively teach the behavior. It is important that this positive attention can be planned before deciding how to respond to the behavior to be decreased. It is also important to think about ways to plan activities to decrease the likelihood of the undesirable behavior occurring in the first place. Look at the following example:

> *Kim likes to rip pages from books in the classroom. Many of the books are starting to get ruined and her teachers are beginning to get concerned. Before deciding how to respond to this, they have decided to reorganize the books in the classroom so that they are not readily available, and they have left books with cardboard pages on a shelf that the children can reach. The teachers have also tried to take turns reading one on one with Kim and teaching her to turn the pages in a book slowly and carefully. Whenever they see Kim turning pages carefully, they praise her.*

Before you begin to plan a consequence for an undesirable behavior, follow these steps:

1. Identify an alternative behavior to take its place.
2. Teach and/or reinforce the alternative behavior.

3. Look at the structure of the environment and the activity and think about ways to prevent the behavior from happening.

HOW TO RESPOND TO UNDESIRABLE BEHAVIORS

Despite all of your teaching and preplanning, the behavior you want a child to do less often may continue. Let's take a look at three ways to respond when this happens. The three strategies we'll be discussing are 1) interruption and redirection, 2) ignoring, and 3) response cost. The first of these procedures is called interruption and redirection. Interruption and redirection is a strategy that you can use to reduce a behavior which involves some type of physical action. Interruption and redirection is a three-step procedure. The steps are:

1) interrupt the child's behavior,

2) direct the child to do the desired behavior, and

3) praise the child for doing or attempting the desired behavior.

It is important when using interruption and redirection to give no verbal attention to the behavior you want to decrease. Provide verbal attention only to the desired behavior. The benefit of using interruption and redirection is that it teaches the child what not to do with minimal attention to the misbehavior. And, just as importantly, it teaches the child what you do want her to do.

Let's look at an example of how interruption and redirection can be used to decrease a child's behavior.

Example 1.

Child	*Teacher*
At the snack table, the child is sitting in front of a cup of applesauce and a spoon, and he is banging the spoon on the table.	*1) Interruption - the teacher stops the child from banging the spoon by placing her hand on the child's hand. The teacher does not comment on the banging.* *2) Redirection - the teacher physically guides the child to eat with the spoon. She also verbally directs the child by saying "Eat with your spoon".* *3) Praising - the teacher says "good, you are eating with your spoon".*

Example 2.

Child	*Teacher*
The child sits at a table with a puzzle and waves hand in front of eyes instead of playing with the puzzle.	*1) Interruption - teacher physically stops the child from hand waving by placing her hand on the child's hands. The teacher does not comment on the child's behavior.* *2) Redirection - the teacher physically guides the child to play with the puzzle and verbally redirects the child by saying, "Put this piece in."* *3) Praising - the teacher says "You are doing a great job with that puzzle."*

The next behavior strategy we will talk about is called extinction. This is a strategy where you stop giving attention or rewards for a behavior that has been rewarded in the past. If you stop giving attention to the behavior, this means you ignore the child when he does the behavior. When a child's behavior has been rewarded with attention in the past and you stop giving the attention, the behavior will decrease (although, it is important to note that the behavior may increase before it begins to decrease). Read the following example:

> *Jasmine is three and a half years old and is just beginning to use some words. Her parents explained to teachers that ever since she was an infant she has cried when she was hungry and they would give her some food. Because she is beginning to talk, her parents would like her to ask for snacks rather than crying. So her teachers decided to teach her to say "eat" or name the snack she wants. Since just teaching this new skill doesn't seem to be decreasing the crying, Jasmine's teachers have decided to also ignore her and turn away from her when she begins to cry for food. When she quiets down, they prompt her to say "eat".*

Jasmine's teachers, in this example, are ignoring the behavior of crying which has in the past always been given attention. It sounds easy to ignore a behavior that you would like a child to decrease. You don't have to do anything. But it's not quite that simple. There are some very important guidelines to think about before deciding to ignore a behavior.

1. Only ignore behaviors that have been rewarded with attention. Behaviors that are self-reinforcing or used to escape from a task will not be affected by extinction.

2. To effectively decrease a child's behavior, you will have to be consistent. This means if you decide to ignore a child's whining, you

will have to ignore it every time.

3. Ignoring a behavior will only work if you are in control of everything that has been reinforcing the behavior. For example, ignoring a child's loud screaming when other children are laughing and joining in with it will probably be ineffective.

4. Only use ignoring for behaviors that you can ignore. You cannot ignore behaviors if someone or something may get hurt. Also, if a child's behavior is so annoying to you that it is difficult for you to consistently ignore it, you may want to try something else.

5. When you first begin ignoring a behavior, a child may try harder to get your attention and do the behavior more often. This actually means that ignoring is working so keep it up.

6. Always reinforce the desired behavior that you would rather have your child do.

Another type of extinction is when you stop giving a reward for a behavior that has been reinforced in the past. An example of this would be the parent that stops giving candy or treats to a child each time he whines for it at the store.

Another way to respond to a behavior you would like a child to do less often is to take away a desired object or privilege. This is called response cost. Look at the following example:

> *Jane and John were playing with a truck, pushing it back and forth. Jane decided to stop the game and push the truck in the sand table. John wanted a turn too, and tried to pull the truck away. Jane and John were struggling over the truck when their teacher came over. She took the truck away and said "You need to share toys." After a few minutes, she gave the truck back and reminded them to share.*

Just like adults get "fined" for speeding or teenagers get grounded for staying out too late, taking away a desired object or privilege is an effective way to

respond to a child's undesirable behavior. Again, there are some important guidelines to follow:

1. Only take away desired objects or privileges for behaviors that occur occasionally. Since taking away a desired object or privilege creates a negative interaction, a different strategy should be used for a behavior that happens more frequently.

2. The desired object or privilege that you take away should be reasonable and closely related to a child's undesirable behavior. If a child colors on the table with crayons, you would remove the crayons rather than saying you can't go out to the playground.

3. With young children, taking away the object or privilege should occur immediately after the undesirable behavior. If you tell a child that he can't go outside on Tuesday for misbehaving on Monday, he may not even remember why he's being punished.

4. Sometimes a child misbehaves with a toy because he does not know how to play with it. In this case, interruption and redirection would be the better strategy to try. It would help to teach the child the right way to use the toy. Taking away the toy would only teach her what not to do.

5. Always reinforce the desired behavior that you would rather have a child do.

DECIDING WHICH WAY YOU WILL RESPOND

Although there are no "hard and fast" rules for selecting a procedure for a specific child behavior, there are some guidelines that may be helpful. We said earlier that the unwanted behavior may be reinforced by 1) attention or rewards, 2) getting out of a task or activity, or 3) self reinforcement. Thinking about what is reinforcing the behavior can help you choose the best way to respond to decrease the behavior. If a child's undesirable behavior is being

reinforced by attention and rewards, what could you do to decrease the behavior? So, if a child always whines to go outside, you could ignore the behavior.

If a child's undesirable behavior is being reinforced because she gets out of doing an activity or task she doesn't like, what could you do? Some answers to this question could be that you stop the behavior or take away the reinforcement. For self-reinforcing motor behaviors such as hand-waving or finger-flicking, you would probably use interruption and redirection by stopping the behavior and prompting the child to do something appropriate with his hands. However when the self-reinforcing activity is something like coloring on the walls or dropping eggs on the floor, you may want to take away a reinforcer. This again is called response cost.

Summary

a. If a child's undesirable behavior is being reinforced by attention or rewards, ignoring the behavior will decrease the behavior.

b. If a child's undesirable behavior is being reinforced because he gets out of an activity or task, requiring him to complete the task will decrease the behavior.

c. If a child's undesirable behavior is self-reinforcing, ignoring the behavior will not make it happen less often. Interruption and redirection or taking away a reinforcer will decrease the behavior.

d. Always remember to reinforce desired behaviors that you would rather have a child do when you are using any strategy to decrease unwanted behavior.

Children continue undesirable behaviors because they are in some way reinforced. Reinforcers that cause undesirable behaviors to continue include:

1. attention and rewards
2. escape from a task
3. self reinforcing

Identifying the reinforcer that follows the undesirable behavior can help us decide what strategies to use. The strategies for reducing undesirable behavior discussed in this packet are:

1. interruption and redirection
2. ignoring or extinction
3. taking away a reinforcer/response cost

Always remember to reinforce desired behaviors when you are using any strategies to decrease unwanted behavior.

BRINGING IT HOME

Fill in the following information:

One behavior I would like a particular child to do less often is: _____

_____

_____

Why might this child continue to do this?

a. attention or a reward
b. escape from a task
c. self reinforcing

The behavior I would rather see this child do is: _____

_____

How can I reinforce this desired behavior? _____ _____

_____

The strategy I can use to decrease the undesirable behavior is:

a. interruption and redirection
b. ignoring (extinction)
c. taking away a desired object or privilege (response cost)

Three things I will consider when using this strategy are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

IN A NUTSHELL

1. Four types of behaviors that teachers would typically like children to stop or do less often are:

   a. Something that is dangerous or may result in the child hurting himself or others,
   b. Something that may result in objects, toys or other materials being damaged or destroyed
   c. Something that interferes with the child or another person's learning and
   d. Something that is annoying to the teacher or other children

2. Children often continue undesirable behaviors because they are reinforced in some way. Some things that may cause undesirable behaviors to continue are:

   a. Attention or rewards
   b. Escape from a task
   c. Self reinforcing activities

3. Three strategies that can be used to reduce undesirable behaviors are:

   a. Interruption and redirection
   b. Ignoring (extinction)
   c. Taking away a reinforcer (response cost)

4. Here are some things to consider when decided which strategy to use:

   a. If a child's undesirable behavior is being reinforced by attention or rewards, ignoring the behavior will decrease the behavior
   b. If a child's undesirable behavior is being reinforced because the child gets out of an activity or task, requiring the child to complete the task will decrease the behavior.
   c. If a child's undesirable behavior is self-reinforcing, ignoring the behavior will not make it happen less often. Interruption and redirection or taking away a reinforcer will decrease the behavior.
   d. Always remember to reinforce desired behaviors that you would rather have a child do when you are using any strategy to decrease undesirable behavior.

TIME-OUT
Information Sheet and Guidelines

What is Time-Out?

Time-out is an effective, mild punishment procedure that can be used to decrease an undesirable behavior. Time-out means time away from reinforcement (or attention).

When Should Time-Out be Used?

Time-out can be used for undesirable behaviors that are aggressive and/or disruptive. Behaviors such as hitting, kicking, spitting, biting or throwing objects can be decreased by using time-out. Time-out should be used only after other strategies such as reinforcing alternative behaviors, interruption and redirection and/or extinction have been shown to be ineffective. Time-out is usually not effective for decreasing self-rewarding behaviors or behaviors that result in the child injuring himself.

Where Should Time-Out Take Place?

The time-out area should be:

safe
boring
accessible
visible

Some people use a small chair in a corner. Others have the child sit on the floor where the misbehavior occurred. Keep the child in a safe place; comfortable and secure; not a place of punishment. The child should not have any toys near him. Keep the child facing away from activity in the classroom if possible (so he can't be entertained by the other children in the classroom).

There does not have to be a special place for the time-out. However, it helps if you get the child into a routine around time-out. The child can sit on the floor, in a chair, or on the grass if you are outside (choose an area where there

are no objects like sticks, rocks, leaves, etc. for child to play with in time-out because it will be *fun* for the child to be in time-out).

How Long Should Time-Out Last?

Time-out should last a short amount of time. The longest time should be one minute for each year of the child's life; a three-year-old would be in time-out for three minutes, a five-year-old for five minutes, etc. Even shorter amounts of time, one to two minutes, are effective.

What Should I Do if the Child Resists?

If the child resists going to the time-out area, gently guide him by the hand. If he continues to resist, you may need to use other physical guidance to get him to the area such as picking him up or guiding from under the arms. If necessary, just have the child sit down on the floor right where he is.

If this resistance turns into a tantrum, ignore the child until the tantrum stops, then tell him that he has a time-out.

If the child leaves the designated area, gently lead him back without speaking to him. Try to sit behind the child so that he is not getting any attention from you (not even a glance or facial expressions). If the child struggles, tries to get up, goes limp, or tries to sit in any other position than straight up in the chair, from behind him use physical guidance/restraint. Only touch him for as long as necessary to correct the action, then let go for him to sit independently. Remember not to discuss any of what you do with him and try not to make eye contact. If he tries to poke or hit you, redirect his hands to his lap. You may decide to add time to his stay for any infractions during his time-out (i.e., if child spits or pokes during his time-out, without saying anything add 30 seconds or 1 minute to the clock). Whatever you decide, *be consistent*.

Some Things to Remember About Time-Out?

-Use time-out only for very negative behaviors such as hurting another person or destructive behaviors.

-Use time-out consistently. If you have decided to use time-out for hitting, use it every time the child hits someone.

-While the child is in time-out, ignore his attempts to get your attention.

-While the child needs a time-out, calmly say something like, "You have a time-out for _____, I'll tell you when you can get up."

-Time outs do not work as well if they are over-used. Save the use of time-out for behaviors that you just cannot ignore.

-It is very important to reward the child for the alternative behavior! This means that if you are using time-out for hitting, you reinforce the child when he plays nicely, or touches another person without hurting him. This is an extremely important element in decreasing the undesirable behavior that goes along with implementing time-out.

-When the time-out is over, remind your child of the "rules" by stating them in a positive manner: "Time-out is over. Remember to keep your hands to yourself."

Two Examples:

Robert hit his classmate Stephen. Robert's teacher said, "Robert, go to the chair. This is a time-out." Robert fell to the floor and refused to move. His teacher picked him up and placed him on the chair. After 2 minutes, she said, "You can get up now. Remember to play nicely with your friends."

Deanna spit at her teacher when she was told to go to circle. The teacher said, "Deanna, sit in time-out. You are not allowed to spit." Deanna sat on the chair but began crying and yelling, "I hate you! You're mean!" The teacher turned her back and ignored her. After about one minute, Deanna began to quiet down. When she had been quiet for about 20 seconds, the teacher said, "You can get up. Walk to circle."

LEAP PRESCHOOL

STAFF SKILL TRAINING PROGRAM

MODULE #7: Teaching New Skills

Main Ideas

- Deciding What to Teach a Child
- Breaking the Skill Down into Easy-to-Learn Steps
- Getting Ready to Teach the New Skill

INTRODUCTION

Some children may need some extra help to learn the things that children their own age are typically doing. Children with developmental delays, speech delays, or sensory impairments may have difficulty learning everyday skills without a carefully designed plan for change. Such plans for change may be important for skills that you would like a child to do more often or with less assistance, or when you want a child to replace an undesirable behavior with a new skill. In the next two modules, we will be talking about how to plan to teach these skills and some general strategies for teaching a child. But first it is important to decide what skills you would like a child to learn.

DECIDING WHAT TO TEACH

Deciding what to teach a child is going to depend on several factors. Think about what you now have to do for a child that she may be able to learn to do for herself. Also, think about what a child would like to learn and what she is ready to learn.

The first question is "What skills does this child usually have done for him? Just think about the many, many things that you, other teachers, and the parents do for this child everyday.. Are there some things that this child may be able to do for himself? Skills that young children need to learn are things that children do everyday at home, at school, and in the community like

walking on the sidewalk, playing with their friends at school, or opening a door. There are simple skills within daily activities that your child could learn that would make her more independent. Here is an example:

> *Circle time was over and it was time to go outside, and the teachers were giving directions for the children to come and get their coats. Derek did not follow the other children and was still sitting on the carpet. One of the teachers walked over, took his hand and led him over to the coats. Then she got his coat off of the hook and held it out for him to put it on. After he had the coat on, she zipped him up and put his hat on his head.*

There are many steps in this activity which the teacher is doing for Derek. Sometimes we are so busy in the classroom and get so used to doing things for children that we forget to let them try things by themselves. A child may feel more successful if there is a task or chore or even one step of an activity that he can complete without any help.

The next thing to ask yourself is "What does this child want to learn?" Children often show what they want to learn by trying something by themselves. Young children can be very persistent when trying something new and when that interest is there, you'll be more successful in teaching the skill. If a child begins to try to manipulate the buttons on a tape player, this would be a good time to teach him how to turn it on or off. If a child loves to swing on the swing set, you could teach her to get on and off the swing by herself. Or, if a child keeps asking you to draw a smiley face, he may like to learn to draw one himself.

It is important to ask yourself "What skills is my child ready to learn?" Children naturally develop some skills before others. Typically, babies learn to crawl first, then to stand and then to walk. What would happen if you tried to teach a baby to walk before she had tried to stand? Probably both you and the baby would be very frustrated. If you try to teach a child new skill that she is just not ready for, the same thing will happen. So, think about what a child can do now to give you an idea of child what that child is ready to learn. In other words, teach a skill that builds on what a child can already do. Let's think about language skills to illustrate this. Here is an example:

> *Alyssa is five years old and has been able to use one word to name and ask for toys and objects for several months. She can also name colors and shapes. Alyssa's teacher has been talking to her speech therapist to get some ideas on ways to teach her to use longer phrases and sentences. Her teacher has decided to teach her to ask for things by using at least two words. When they are playing with blocks, her teacher holds all the blocks. Alyssa says "block". Her teacher holds up a red block and a blue block and asks "Which one?" Red block or blue block?" Alyssa says "blue". Her teacher says "Here's the blue block." Alyssa says "blue block" as she continues to build.*

Alyssa's teacher is building on the skill of naming things by using one word by teaching Alyssa to put words together to make a phrase or sentence. There are many opportunities for you to do this throughout the day in activities such as dressing, playing, or eating. What can a child already do in these activities? If a child can put on a jacket, the next step could be to teach him to zip it. If a child has learned to use a spoon, it may be time to teach him to

use a fork. If a child often plays with simple puzzles at home, more challenging puzzles may be something to try.

The next thing to think about is "What do you want a child to learn?" Teaching independence in daily activities often takes time initially, but eventually can help you in the classroom situation. For example, independence in dressing and eating skills can also make busy transition times a little easier in your classroom.

Sometimes teachers would like children to learn skills so that they can participate in more classroom activities. Skills such as gluing, pasting, cutting and drawing are important for participation in certain art activities. If the teacher would like a child to become more involved in group activities outside such as catch, she may want to teach a child some ball skills such as throwing, catching, or kicking.

The last question to ask yourself is Are there some skills a child can do in some situations but not in others?" Sometimes children learn a new skill in a certain situation but are unable to do it at other times. For example, if you have taught a child to zip his winter coat, you may also need to teach him to zip his sweater and his pants. When a child learns a new skill it is not unusual for the skill to be done only with a certain item, person, or in a certain situation. This is particularly true for children with developmental delays. A child may clean up toys at home, but not at school. She may push a car back and forth,

but not a ball. Another child may throw and catch a ball with his father but not with a friend at school.

It is important to look for opportunities to teach priority skills throughout the day: in a variety of settings, with a variety of objects, and with a number of different people. When a child learns a skill across these different situations, it is called generalization.

In reviewing this section, here are questions a classroom staff should ask when deciding what to teach a child:

1. What are certain tasks which you may do for this child?
2. What does this child want to learn?
3. What is this child ready to learn?
4. What do I want this child to learn?
5. Are there skills that this child can do in some situations but not in others?

It would probably be difficult for you and a child to attempt to teach all of theseskills all at once. When deciding what you would like a child to learn, it is important to pick a few priority skills to begin with. When you and the child are more comfortable with the new skills you can begin to work on others.

BREAKING THE SKILL DOWN

How do children learn these new skills? Most skills that children or adults learn are complicated, and they can be broken down, step by step. Breaking down a complicated skill into easy-to-learn steps is called task analysis. When

you have decided what to teach a child, you won't expect a child to do all of the skill at once. If a child has never been asked to put on his own coat, you may want to ask him to just put one arm in, then the other. When he can do that very well, you can work on teaching him to zip it up.

To break a skill down into smaller steps, you could list the steps from memory, or actually do the behavior yourself and write down each step. You could also watch someone else do the step and list them. You could also do the skill yourself and list the steps as you go along.

So, to break down a skill into easy to learn steps, you can 1) list the steps from memory, 2) watch someone else do the skill, or 3) do the skill yourself and list the steps as you go along. Just remember to start out easy and gradually build on what your child is able to do. This will allow your child to learn new skills without undue frustration.

CHECK IT OUT

Once you have listed the steps of the skill, you need to take a close look at which steps a child can already do. To do this, you can ask a child to do the skill and gradually give more and more help for any steps that this child is unable to do by himself. Then you can jot down how the child did next to each of the steps you've listed. You may need to do this a few times over a couple

of days to get a good picture of which steps you'll need to teach.

THINK IT THROUGH

Now that you have decided what to teach, broke it down into easy to learn steps, and checked which steps the child can already do, look at your list and decide if it is a reasonable place to begin. If there are still several difficult steps involved in teaching the complex skill or if you now feel the child is just not ready to learn this new skill, you may need to step back and either break one or two of these steps down further or begin to work on a skill that is a prerequisite to learning this more complex skill. Here is an example:

Ms. R. wanted to teach Dionne to write her name. She listed the following steps to teach:

1. *Pick up pencil.*
2. *Grip tightly.*
3. *Write a D.*
4. *Write an I.*
5. *Write an O.*
6. *Write an N.*
7. *Write an N.*
8. *Write an E.*

When Ms. R. checked Dionne's ability to do this skill, she found that she easily picked up the pencil, but could not grip it tightly or form any of the letters neatly. She decided to step back and begin to teach this skill by breaking down writing the easiest letters, I, and O, further. Here are the

new steps she decided on:

1. *Pick up pencil.*
2. *Grip pencil tightly.*
3. *Draw a line (I).*
4. *Draw a circle (O)*

By thinking the steps through, you may also determine that the child can already do the skill reasonably well and your time would be well spent focussing on other skills at this time.

CONCLUSION

In summary, when you are deciding what to teach a child, here are the steps you can follow:

1) **Decide on a skill to teach**.

2) **Break it down**. Break the skill you want to teach the child down into easy to learn steps.

3) **Check it out**. Practice the skill with the child and determine which steps the child can already do and which steps you will need to teach.

4) **Think it through**. Looking at your list of steps and how the child did when you did the check, decide whether 1) the child already can do this skill, 2) this is a good place to begin with the child, 3) there is a need to break one or two of the steps down further. If you need to break some of the steps down further, just go back to step 2 (break it down) and continue through the list.

SUMMARY

1. When you are deciding what to teach a child, ask yourself these questions:

    a. What do I now do for this child?
    b. What does this child want to learn?
    c. What is this child ready to learn?
    d. What do I want this child to learn?
    e. Are there skills that this child can do in some situations but not in others?

2. Once you have decided to teach a child a new skill, follow these steps:

    a. Break it down. Break the skill you want to teach the child down into easy to learn steps.

    b. Check it out. Practice the skill with the child and determine which steps the child can alread to and which steps you will need to teach.

    c. Think it through. Decide whether this is a skill you and the child are ready to work on.

BRINGING IT HOME

Decide on a skill to teach a particular child by thinking about these questions:

1. DECIDE ON A SKILL TO TEACH

   What skills do I want to teach this child? _____

   _____

2. BREAK IT DOWN

   How can this skill be broken down into easy to learn steps? _____

   _____

3. CHECK IT OUT

   Practice this skill with the child.

   Are there steps he/she can do already? _____

   _____

   Which steps will you need to teach this child? _____

   _____

4. THINK IT THROUGH

   Are you and the child ready to work on this skill? If not, go back to step one and rethink what you would like to teach this child.

IN A NUTSHELL

A. Teach the child skills that you would like him/her to do more often or with less assitance or when you would like to replace undesirable behavior with a skill that is more acceptable.

B. Ask yourself the following questions to help you decide waht to teach this child:

1. What skills do I do for this child?
2. What does this child want to learn?
3. What is this child ready to learn?
4. What do I want this child to learn?
5. Are there skills that this child can do in some situations but not in others?

C. Once you have decided what to teach this child, break the skill down into easy to learn steps. This is called task analysis.

D. Break it down. To break a skill down, you can:

1. List the steps from memory.
2. Watch someone else do the skill and list the steps, or
3. Do the skill yourself and list the steps as you go along.

E. Check it out. When you have the steps listed, check how well the child can do each of the steps. Practice the skill with the child giving gradually more help until you get a good idea of which steps the child can do and how much help he/she needs.

F. Think it through. Decide on whether the steps you now have listed is a reasonable place to start. If there are many difficult steps in this list, you may need to break one or two of these steps down furter and teach that step before you go on to the whole skill. As you are thinking it through, you may also decide that the child does better with the skill then you thought he\she would be able to and your time would be better spent teaching a different skill.

LEAP PRESCHOOL

STAFF SKILL TRAINING PROGRAM

MODULE #8: Hierarchy of Prompts

Main Ideas

- Types of Assistance
- Using Assistance to Teach New Skills
- Choosing Easy Materials and Settings
- Getting a Child Interested in Learning a New Skill

INTRODUCTION

In deciding what you want to teach a child, it is important to think about how to break a complicated skill down into smaller steps. Making a list of these steps is called a task analysis. After you have done this, it is important to check out what the child is already able to do and which steps you will need to teach. It is also important to think through this list of steps you come up with and decide if it is a good place to start or if you need to break one or two of these steps down further.

CHAINING

Now that you have an idea of the steps that you would like to teach your child, what is the next step? Where should you start? It may be difficult to teach all of the steps at once. It is a good idea at this point to decide which order you would like to teach these steps. One way to plan where to start teaching is to begin with the step that would be the easiest to teach a child. This will help both you and the child feel like you accomplish something quickly. When a child is doing this step very well, you can begin with another step. The most difficult steps would be taught last. Teaching a skill step by step in this manner is called chaining. Chaining is the process of reinforcing a child for learning more and more steps of a task analysis. So, when a child has learned

the easiest step in the task analysis, you will begin to require a little more. You will continue to add steps in this way until the child is able to complete all of the steps in the task analysis.

Sometimes when you begin to teach this way, the steps naturally build on each other and you will begin to teach step one then continue sequentially through the list. You may find at other times that the easiest step is the last step. In this case you could do all of the steps for the child, then let him finish up by doing the last step by himself. When he does the last step very well you can begin to have him do the last two steps by himself. This is another type of chaining called backward chaining. To illustrate backward chaining, think about the skill of cleaning up toys. If you ask a child to clean up after center time when then floor may be scattered with many toys, the child may feel overwhelmed, refuse or be unable to complete the task. However, if you clean up most of the items before giving the direction to clean up, then ask the child to finish the task, you may find that she is much more successful.

ASSISTANCE

Young children sometimes need help to learn a new skill. As they learn the skill, they begin to need less and less help. The many ways that we give children help when they are learning is called assistance. Assistance is help given to a child at the same time you give her a direction or ask a question.

Giving a child assistance helps her learn a new skill without becoming too frustrated. It will also prevent a child from learning the wrong way to do the skill or task. Holding a child's shirt to help her put it on is an example of assistance. Another example is giving a child a hint like "Pick up the big block...it's red".

There are five types of assistance that you can use to teach a child a new skill. The first type is called modeling. Modeling means that you show the child what to do. Many skills can be taught to children by modeling the skill and having them watch you. Children often learn to jump, clap their hands, or use sign language by watching something else. You can also have a child watch other children in the classroom model how to do something. Here is an example:

> *Ms. S. wanted to teach Sherri to scribble or draw. She had tried many times to put the chalk or crayon in Sherri's hand and physically guide her hand to draw. Sherri didn't seem interested and rarely chose to draw when she was choosing centers at free play time. One day, when the children were out on the playground, Sherri was watching some of the children drawing with chalk on the sidewalk. Ms. S. placed some chalk in Sherri's hand and told her to do what the other kids were doing. Sherri enjoyed watching and imitating the other kids.*

Another type of assistance you can use with a child is a visual cue. A visual cue is anything that you show a child so that she better understands what you want her to do. The most common type of visual cue we use with children is gesturing. An example of gesturing would be to tell a child to sit down while you are pointing to the chair. Indicating "big" with widespread arms when teaching big and little is another example of using gestures. Another way

to use visual cues is to draw dots that children can trace to draw shapes or letters. Sometimes teachers use pictures to teach children the different areas in the classroom or where their cubbies or lockers are located.

A verbal cue is another type of assistance that you can give children to teach new skills. One type of verbal cue is any 'hint' that you may give a child to help him learn a new skill. For example, if you wanted to teach a child the names of different colors, you might point to the color red and say "This color is red. Say re..." Another way to use a verbal cue as a hint is to exaggerate or emphasize an important word. For example, you might say to a child, "Point to the RED balloon" while exaggerating the word red. For example, you could comment "This is a red car" then ask "What color is this?"

The next type of assistance we'll be talking about is physical assistance. Physical assistance means helping a child by physically guiding him with your hands or body. There are many different levels of physical assistance you can use with a child. Sometimes you will need to use full physical assistance by placing your hands over the child's to guide him through the skill. One example of this would be to place your hands over a child's hands to help him pull up his pants. Full physical assistance is the most assistance you can give a child. It is used when a child is not familiar with doing the skill you are teaching him. Full physical assistance helps him practice the movements required to do a skill.

There are some skills that a child may be somewhat familiar with which

you may begin teaching with partial instead of full physical assistance. This partial physical assistance helps to make sure the child does not fail at a new skill. For example, if you began to teach a child to eat with a fork by using full physical assistance, the next step may be to give less help. It is important to gradually fade how much help you are giving a child rather than withdrawing the assistance all at once. So, you can use less assistance, but still help by placing your hand on the child's arm or wrist and very lightly guiding her through the skill. In other words, your hand is there to help when necessary, but the child is beginning to do the skill on her own.

Another common example of how we use physical assistance is when teaching a child to ride a bike. At first, balancing the bike is for a child so the adult gives full assistance for balancing while the child is getting used to pedaling and steering. As the child's balance skills improve, the adult uses partial physical assistance to balance the bike only when needed. This partial physical assistance may start as having both hands on the bike and gradually fade to the point where the adult is running behind the child, ready to catch him and help balance if necessary.

To summarize, the types of assistance are:

1) Modeling (showing the child what to do)
2) Visual cues (showing the child something that helps him understand what to do)
3) Verbal cues (telling the child something that helps him understand what to do)
4) Physical assistance (using your hands or body to help the child do the skill)

USING ASSISTANCE

When you have decided to teach a child a new skill, think about how to help the child learn the skill. If the child is unable to do the skill now, you will need to plan to use some type of assistance. For example, if a child has never cleaned up before and you would like him to learn this skill, simply saying "David, clean up now" may not be enough to teach him. You could physically guide him, model for him, make sure containers for toys are nearby, or give verbal directions for each toy. Choosing a type of assistance will be based on what you are teaching, how much of the skill the child can already do, and what type of assistance you and the child are most comfortable with. Here are a few other guidelines to remember about using assistance:

1. Assistance can be used for the first step of a skill or for each step. For example, if you are teaching a child to put several toys away, you might model putting one toy away as you give the child the direction "Put the toys away". After you have modeled once, you may be able to just give the verbal direction or to use the visual cue of pointing to each toy.

2. If you are teaching a task that involves a series of different steps, such as putting beads on a string. For example, you may be able to point to the bead as you tell the child to pick it up, but you may need to use full physical assistance to help the child put the beads on the string.

3. Use only the amount of assistance that is needed. The amount of assistance that you use should be enough to allow a child to successfully complete the task without frustration, but not so much that there is not learning or challenge involved.

4. Gradually fade your assistance as your child begins to learn the skills. In other words, gradually reduce the amount of assistance or the type

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of assistance that you give the child as she learns to do the skill. Slowly fading your assistance will ensure that the child continues to do the skill correctly, but will encourage the child to be more independent.

5. Sometimes you will have to use extra assistance if the child does not respond, incorrectly responds, or attempts but is unable to correctly respond to your direction. This extra assistance is sometimes called a **correction procedure**. For example, you may ask a child to take a bite of food as you point to his plate (a visual cue). If a child does not take a bite within several seconds, you might decide to physically guide his hand to take a bite. The physical assistance, in this example, is used to help the child learn the correct response. When you use extra assistance, the end result should be that the child responds correctly. Make sure that you give the child plenty of time to respond before you give the extra assistance. And, make the additional assistance positive by emphasizing the correct response. In other words, instead of saying "No that's not where you put the fork" you can say "That fork goes over here."

CHOOSING EASY MATERIALS OR SETTINGS

Sometimes the simplest way to teach a new skill is to choose easy materials or settings. One example of this would be to allow a child to practice catching ball, using a large ball which would be easier than using a small tennis ball. A child may learn a new skill in a quiet area, rather than in a noisy, distracting setting. Catching from two feet away would be easier than catching a ball thrown from 10 feet away. And, it would be easier for a child to "find the red crayon" from choice of two rather than from a whole box of crayons. Here's another example:

Four year old Carly was always on the move. She would begin to play with a toy, but within one minute would lose interest and move on to something else. Her teacher, Ms. N. has been trying to teach her to keep her attention on one toy or activity for longer periods of time. Ms. N. has decided that to begin to

teach this, she is going to need to really structure the situation. At the beginning of center time, Ms. N. has Carly come over to a table with her. Ms. N. stands right behind her so she can't scoot her chair away. Ms. N. sets up Carly's favorite puzzle with only three pieces not finished. She verbally prompts Carly to finish the last three pieces and put the puzzle away. Although this only takes a Carly about a minute, Ms. N. plans to gradually increase the number of pieces, length of time, and types of toys Carly will play with at this time. Once Carly is able to play for longer periods of time in this structured activity, Ms. N. will set up the puzzle and other toys at less structured times.

Sometimes it is necessary to teach a child a new skill in a more structured, less distracting situation. Setting up this very structured play time for Carly is an example of this. Of course, when a child is able to use the easier materials or setting to do the new skill, you can gradually make it more natural, and less structured. Here are a few of the ways you can choose easier materials:

1. Use materials that are easier (larger, stretchier, simpler)
2. Give fewer choices when asking a child to discriminate between materials (two crayons instead of a whole box)
3. Position the child and yourself to make the skill easier (get closer when teaching the child to catch)
4. Make sure the setting isn't too distracting (go to quiet area, etc)

THINK ABOUT WHEN TO TEACH

The time of day that you choose to teach a skill to a child is another thing to think about. Whenever possible, teach skills when it is natural for them to happen. Teaching a child to zip his coat when he doesn't really need a coat on may be confusing and uncomfortable for the child. It also may give you a false

sense of whether or not the child can really do the skill. A child may easily answer yes/no questions in a one-to-one teaching situation, but not be able to when you ask him what he did during center time. It may be better to teach the skill of answering yes/no questions throughout the day whenever it is needed.

Sometimes it is too difficult to teach a skill in the natural environment. As mentioned earlier, you may need to teach the skill in a less distracting situation or when you are not as busy. For example, although the best time for a child to learn mealtime skills would be during snack time, this can often be a very rushed and confusing time for a child. Another time that is natural for skills around mealtime my be during free play in the housekeeping area. This may be an easier time to teach this skill. The second thing to think about is the time of day. Here is an example:

> *Ms. G. wanted to teach Joel colors during a one-to-one situation at school. Ms. G. was taking Joel over to the book area at the end of the day after the children came in from the playground. She had chosen this time because the assistants could help the rest of the children transition to get ready to go home and she would be free to work with Joel. During this time, Joel would be very distracted and could not remain on task for very long.*

Why do you think it was difficult for Joel to learn this skill at the end of the day? Children can be tired after coming in from the playground and may be very distracted after spending time involved in very active play. The transition to go home in the classroom may also be very distracting. Therefore, teaching skills at this time can be very difficult. <u>It is best to teach skills when</u>

a child is not tired or distracted by what is going on in the classroom. Sometimes it is difficult to work these suggestions into your plans for teaching a child. It is important to look at the classroom schedule and to take opportunities for embedding instruction and for providing one on one instruction.

GETTING A CHILD INTERESTED IN LEARNING A SKILL

Another thing to consider when deciding when to teach children certain skills is to use motivating materials or activities. One way to do this is to use a child's favorite activity, toy, or character to get him interested in the new skill. If a child loves to do puzzles and you want to teach him to name shapes, you might get him a puzzle with shapes in it. It may be easier to teach a child who loves to jump to jump onto pictures, colors, or shapes rather than pointing to them. Books about other children learning or doing the skill may also increase a child's interest. Many parents use children's books and videos about potty training to get children interested in learning to use the toilet.

Sometimes just setting up materials in an interesting way will get a child interested. Setting paints, paper and water out on a table may make it more likely that a child will be interested in art than if these materials are put away in a box on a shelf. If a child saw Mr. Potato Head and all of the parts out on a table it would be more likely that he would initiate putting the parts together

than if all of the parts were put away out of sight. It will be easier for a child to choose what to play with and keep himself busy when toys are put away neatly on shelves or in bins then when they are all thrown into a large box. When a child is unable to choose or plan what to play with, you may need to remind her of what is available by setting the toys out or organizing them neatly.

Because a child will learn a skill best if you teach when he is interested and initiates trying a skill, there are some ways to set up this interest to give you more opportunities to teach in a natural setting. If you provide a child with plenty of opportunities to observe others doing the skill, the child may try to imitate it. A child may also learn to play appropriately with certain toys by watching other children in the classroom. If you would like a child to say "Thank you" when he is given something, he may learn to do this faster if he hears others doing it more frequently.

Doing these three things; using motivating materials, setting up materials in an interesting way, and providing a child with opportunities to observe others, will make it more likely that a child will initiate in learning the skill. Now you'll be able to, when possible, wait until a child is interested in the materials or in doing the skill. Here in an example:

> *Mrs. M. decided to teach Maura to ask other children to play with her. One day Maura was playing with her favorite puzzle in the classroom. Mrs. N. said "Maura, ask Jacob to play with you." Maura began to cry because she didn't want Jacob to play with her puzzle. Later that day, Maura was playing on the swing set outside. When she began to get on the seesaw, Mrs. M. again said "Maura, ask Jacob to play with you." Maura did ask Jacob and the two children had fun playing together on the seesaw.*

The puzzle was difficult for Maura to share because it can be a one person toy and because it seems to be Maura's favorite "special" toy. Maura is probably less interested in other children playing with her when she is playing with this type of a toy. There are many games or toys, like the seesaw, that actually require another child to make it easier for Maura to learn this skill. If you have a child's interest in the activity or materials you are going to use to teach a skill, a child may learn the skill more effectively. So, it may be more effective to have Maura ask another child to play when she is interested in a ball or a board game.

SUMMARY

A) Begin by teaching a child the easiest step. When she is doing that step very well, begin to teach the next step. This is called chaining.

B) When you give a child some type of help at the same time you give her a direction or ask a question you are using assistance.

C) The types of assistance we discussed were:
1. Modeling - show the child what to do
2. Visual Cues - showing the child something that helps her understand what to do
3. Verbal Cues - telling the child something that helps him understand what to do
4. Physical Assistance - using your hands or body to help the child do the skill

D) Sometimes the simplest way to teach a new skill is to choose easy materials or settings.

E) Teach skills when it is natural for them to happen and when the child is not tired.

F) Get the child interested in learning a skill by having her observe others doing the skill, using motivating materials, or setting up materials in an interesting way.

BRINGING IT HOME

Fill in the following information:

A skill that I would like to teach _____ is _____

Here's how I could break this skill down into easy to learn steps:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

The easiest step for this child to learn would be:

_____
_____

I will teach the rest of the steps in this order:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

I would use the following type(s) of assistance:

_____
_____

Here's how I will fade the assistance:

_____
_____

Here are other strategies:
-choose easy materials or settings
-teach skills when it is natural for them to happen
-provide opportunities for the child to observe others doing the skill
-use motivating materials
-set up materials in an interesting way

Here are some ways I may use these strategies to teach this skill:

_____
_____

IN A NUTSHELL

A. Begin by teaching the child the easiest step. When he is doing that step very well, begin to teach the next step. This is called chaining.

B. When you give a child some type of help at the same time you give her a direction or ask a question you are using assistance.

C. The types of assistance we discussed were:

1. Modeling - showing the child what to do
2. Visual Cues - showing the child something that helps her understand what to do
3. Verbal Cues - telling the child something that helps him understand what to do
4. Physical Assistance - Using your hands or body to help the child do the skill

D. Choosing a type of assistance will be based on what you are teaching, how much of the skill the child can already do, and what type of assistance you and the child are most comfortable with.

E. Here are some other guidelines for using assistance:

1. Assistance can be used for the first step of a skill or for each step. For example, if you are teaching a child to put several toys away, you might model putting one toy away as you give the child the direction "Put the toys away". After you have modeled once, you may be able to just give the verbal direction or to use the visual cue of pointing to each toy.

2. If you are teaching a task that involves a series of different steps, such as putting on shoes, you may need to use several different types of assistance throughout. For example, you may be able to point to the shoe as you tell the child to pick up his shoe, but you may need to use full physical assistance to help the child brush his teeth.

3. Use only the amount of assistance that is needed. The amount to assistance that you use should be enough to allow the child to successfully complete the task without frustration, but not so much that there is no learning or challenge involved.

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4. Gradually fade your assistance as the child begins to learn the skills. In other words, gradually reduce the amount of assistance or the type of assistance that you give the child as she learns to do the skill. Slowly fading your assistance will ensure that the child continues to do the skill correctly, but will encourage the child to do more and more independently.

5. Sometimes you will have to use more assistance if the child does not respond, incorrectly responds, or attempts but is unable to correctly respond to your direction. Here are some things to consider when giving more assistance:

   a. Give the child plenty of time to respond before you give more assistance. You want the child to try what you've asked and have a chance to do it with the least amount of assistance. But, at the same time, you don't want the child to get frustrated or practice a wrong response. Five to ten seconds is usually a good amount of time to wait before giving more assistance.

   b. Emphasize the correct response. Rather than saying "no, that's not right" tell the child what the right response is. Emphasizing the correct response is much more positive.

F. Sometimes the simplest way to teach a new skill is to choose easy materials or settings. Here are some things to consider:

1. Use materials that are easier - a larger ball to teach catching, a stretchier jacket to teach dressing, or a game with fewer steps to teach turn taking.
2. Give fewer choices when asking the child to discriminate between materials - show two crayons instead of a whole box when asking the child to "find the red crayon".
3. Position yourself and the child to make the skill easier - get closer when teaching the child to catch - stay close to the child to encourage them to complete an activity.
4. Make sure the setting isn't too distracting - perhaps try a quiet area of the room.

G. Teach skills when it is natural for them to happen

H. Get the child interested in learning a skill by:
1. having her observe others doing the skill
2. using motivating materials, or
3. setting up materials in an interesting way

LEAP PRESCHOOL

STAFF SKILL TRAINING PROGRAM

MODULE #9: Encouraging Children to Communicate

Main Ideas

- Recognition of Different Means of Communication
- Identify the Different Types of Communication
- Identify Strategies for Encouraging Communication
- Environmental Strategies to Encourage Communication
- Incidental Teaching

Introduction

Many preschool children in early intervention have needs in the area of language and communication. They need to learn to communicate with their family, friends, and teachers. Some children have goals that they will learn to say words or use words in sentences while others may be working on developing different types of communication such as using sign language or pictures. Some children may even need to work on the most basic level of showing an interest in communicating. In each of these situations, communication skills are best learned in natural situations rather than in formalized, one to one or group instruction.

Teachers are in an ideal situation to encourage young children to communicate. The classroom can provide several natural situations, along with the opportunity to interact with peers, which can be very useful in teaching communication skills.

HOW A CHILD COMMUNICATES:

When we talk about communication, it is important to realize that there are many ways to communicate. Read through all of the examples in Part 1.

1. *Alexa cries. Her teacher gives her Cheerios.*
2. *Darnell reaches toward a puzzle on a high shelf. His teacher reaches up and gets the puzzle down for him.*

3. *Courtney gives her friend a picture of a toy car. Her friend gives her a car to play with.*

4. *Jesse says to his teacher "May I have more juice please?". His teacher hands him the juice pitcher.*

What message were all these children communicating, and in what ways did the children communicate?

The types of communication given in these examples are: 1) pointing to an object, 2) giving someone an object, 3) using gestures or signs, 4) vocalizes, and 5) uses one word.

Each of the people in these examples responded appropriately to the message, even though only one of the children used words to get his message across. It is important to encourage communication, whether verbal or nonverbal. Think about how your child currently communicates and encourage continued and increased communication right at or slightly above that level.

This list of ways a child communicates gets gradually more complex. Children often use different means of communication in different situations or even with different people. A child may be very talkative at home, but may use pointing or whining to communicate in an unfamiliar, crowded or noisy situation.

Children also often combine different communicative means in a single message. For example, a child may cry, reach for the door and vocalize when she wants to go outside.

WHY A CHILD COMMUNICATES

Just as there are different ways for a child to get a message across, there are many reasons that children communicate each day. So far, we have mainly been talking about the first reason a child communicates which is to **request**. Children use requesting to ask for things that they need or want. Food, toys, attention, comfort, particular people, activities or motivating objects may be requested by using any of the ways to communicate we have already talked about.

Children also communicate to **protest**. When a child indicates that he doesn't like or doesn't want something, this is a protest. A child may also push something away, say or sign "no" or show a picture of the word "no".

Children also protest in undesirable ways. Yelling "no", throwing something, screaming, or hitting someone are some undesirable ways children protest. These undesirable behaviors will often decrease when a child is taught appropriate ways to protest.

Another reason children communicate is to **comment**. To comment means to tell about something you see or something you are doing. A child's comment may be one or two words such as "Look birdie" or "big truck". Or the comment can be more complex such as, "I'm putting the little boy in the dollhouse". Some examples of non-verbal types of commenting are a child pointing to an airplane in the sky, a child signing "big" when a big truck goes

by, or a child showing his dad the painting he made.

The next reason a child communicates we'll talk about is to **answer simple questions**. Someone asks the child a question and the child responds in some way. Look at the following examples:

His teacher asks Troy, "What do you want to play with?" Troy goes to the shelf and gets a puzzle.

Her friend asks Angela, "Do you want to play with the dollhouse?" Angela nods her head "yes".

Davey asks Kara "What did you do at school today?" Kara say "Play cars".

There are many types of questions that you can ask a child. Some of the types of questions include:

Making a choice - "Do you want to play with the dollhouse or the cars?"

Affirming or denying (yes/no) - "Did you break this toy?" or "Do you like juice?"

Asking about past events - "What did you do today?"

Asking about concepts - "What color is this?"

A child may also **ask questions** to communicate. The child may ask someone for information ("Where is Ms. S.?", "What are we doing today?" and "Why do birds sing?") are some verbal examples of asking questions. Non-verbally a child may point to something as if to say "What's that?" or bring you a picture of her grandma as if to say "Where's Grandma?"

We often begin to teach a child to talk by asking him to label objects (in other words to answer the question "What is this?"). Although this is a nice skill for children to have, we must not stop there. Labeling objects is a very concrete skill which some children can learn very quickly. It may seem that the child is progressing rapidly in communication when he is able to name a lot of objects. We must remember that this is only one type of communication. When a child is asked too many questions, there is less opportunity for him to initiate the conversation. Because he is being asked questions, most of his communication is for one reason, to answer questions. We want children to realize that they can communicate for many reasons.

WHEN AND WHERE A CHILD COMMUNICATES

When is the best time to teach communication? When does a child want or need to communicate? The answer to these questions is the same. The best time to teach communication to a child is when the child wants or needs to communicate. At any time during the classroom schedule, there are teaching opportunities available to teach communication.

The answer to "where can you teach communication?" is similar. Teach communication where the child needs or wants to communicate. At circle time, snack, free play times, structured times; these are places and activities where you can teach communication.

RESPONSIVE STRATEGIES FOR ENCOURAGING COMMUNICATION

The three rules to remember are:

1) WATCH

2) WAIT

3) FOLLOW THE CHILD'S LEAD

The methods for encouraging communication will be most effective if you remember these three steps: 1. WATCH - watch to see what the child is interested in and watch for signs that the child is communicating with you. 2. WAIT - don't talk or ask questions for a few moments to give the child a chance to initiate communication (at least 5 seconds). 3. FOLLOW THE CHILD"S LEAD - talk about and play with the materials that the child is interested in.

It often seems that the most difficult of these steps is WAIT. It is so natural to want to fill in the silence with talking or asking questions. But be careful; allow the child plenty of time to initiate conversation and respond to your conversation.

MIRRORING

If the child vocalizes or does something with a toy or object while you are WATCHing and WAITing, you can **mirror** what he/she says or does. This is the first strategy for encouraging communication that we will be discussing.

Mirroring means to imitate what the child says or does. This is very effective with children that are not saying words. It shows the child that his/her vocalizations and play behaviors are important to you and gives him/her a chance to participate in a "conversation". If the child squeals with delight, you squeal. If she says "ba ba ba" you say "ba ba ba". Once you get into a mirroring activity with the child, you can alter it slightly to see if the child will imitate you. This can work particularly well with a mirroring activity that involves vocalizations or verbalizations.

TURN TAKING

Mirroring is one example of the next strategy - **turn taking**. **Turn taking means developing a pattern of conversation or behaviors in which you and the child alternate saying or doing things.** The best examples of turn taking have both partners, you and the child, involved with the same materials or talking about the same topic. Although this may be difficult at first, the turn taking partners should be paying attention to each other. Taking turns can be done with verbalizations or vocalizations or by physical actions. It is important to share control of the turn taking by letting the child decide what to do or talk about as often as you like.

REFLECTING

If the child is just beginning to use words or combine words, the strategy of **reflecting** may be helpful. **Reflecting means encouraging the child's attempts to communicate by repeating them back to him.** If the child uses incorrect pronunciations, you can model the correct way to say it without calling attention to the error. Here's an example: Krystal pushes a car and says "tar doe". Her teacher says "Yes, the car goes." Notice that her teacher did not say "no, don't say tar say car", but simply repeated it back, using the appropriate pronunciation.

Children that are learning to use pictures or sign language to communicate also can benefit from the strategy of reflecting. When the child gives you the picture of a ball to ask for a ball, you can say "Oh you want the ball."

EXPANSION

If you add more words to a child's message, you are using the next strategy, **expansion**. A child can learn new concepts or more elaborate sentence structure when her message is expanded. When you add more words to what your child says, try to increase the language level only slightly.

SELF TALK

The next strategy is **self talk**, which means talking about what you are doing, thinking, or feeling. Use self talk that is at or slightly more advanced than the child's current language level. If the child is not talking, use 1 or 2 word descriptions such as "Book", "Big ball", or "We're eating". If the child uses 1 or 2 word phrases you can use 3 or 4 word phrases such as "You're making dinner" "It is hot today" or "I'm drawing a cat".

PARALLEL TALK

Parallel talk is similar to self talk except you describe what the child is doing, seeing, or feeling. Again, the descriptions you use should be at or slightly above the child's current language level. If the child is playing with blocks, you might say "Block on" or "Oops the blocks fell down". If he/she is playing with dinosaurs, you could say "The big dinosaur is fighting with the little dinosaur". This strategy of parallel talk is also helpful when a child is not yet able to express feelings of sadness, frustration, or anger. "I know you fell sad when we can't find your favorite toy" or "You are angry. Jason took your doll."

Commenting about what you and the child are doing are great strategies for language enrichment. However, just as with questions, you must use it sparingly with long pauses between statements to give the child plenty of time to respond or initiate conversation.

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE COMMUNICATION

There is another group of strategies for increasing opportunities for communication that are called **environmental strategies**. These are **strategies which involve arranging something about the setting or materials in the classroom to make it more likely that a child will need or want to communicate.** These environmental strategies are used during situations that are part of an established routine and work best when the child understands that routines have predictable sequence of events. When the child is highly motivated by the materials and routines that are being arranged, he will be more likely to communicate with you.

FORGETFULNESS

The first environmental strategy we'll look at is called **forgetfulness**. This is where you purposefully "forget" to provide everything that is needed for an activity. The child will then need to use some type of communication to let you know that you forgot. Look at this example:

> *Kirk wanted to paint. He gave his teacher a picture of paint to let her know. His teacher, Mrs. G., set up an easel with paper and three jars of paint. She did not give Kirk any paintbrushes. Mrs. G. told Kirk, "Go ahead, you can paint now", and went to help some other children. Kirk looked around for the brushes, then went over to Mrs. G. and pulled on her hand. Mrs. G. gave him an expectant look as if she didn't understand what he needed. Finally, Kirk found the picture of paintbrushes and give it to his teacher. Mrs. G. said "Oh you need paintbrushes" and gave them to Kirk.*

Other examples include giving the child applesauce with no spoon or laying out paper but not bringing out any crayons or markers. For some children, you may need to be close by and/or holding the necessary material.

VISIBLE BUT UNREACHABLE

Another environmental strategy is called **visible but unreachable**. For this strategy you can place an object that the child needs or wants, is out of reach, but is still within sight. Desired objects can be placed on a high shelf or in a locked, see-through cabinet. For example, you can place toys in a see through net bag out of the child's reach. A similar strategy is to introduce an interesting toy or object to the child that he/she needs help with. He/she will need to ask you for help in some way. For example, show the child a wind up toy that he/she cannot wind up or tell the child that needs help with his/her shoes to get them on before going outside. It is common for adults to get into the habit of knowing ahead about what children need or want and giving it to them before they ask. If we wait before providing for children's needs and wants, we can use these motivating situations to give children plenty of opportunities to communicate.

VIOLATE EXPECTATIONS/SABOTAGE

Another way to encourage children to initiate communication is to **violate expectations**. In other words, do something silly. Try to put a doll's shoe on the child's foot, or put a sock on his/her hand. Some other examples would be to give a child a marker without taking the lid off. The child might try to protest or try to fix the situation and you can encourage this type of communication. **Sabotage** is a similar strategy. Sabotage is used by deliberately interfering with an activity. For example, you might hide the snack and then ask the child to get it off of the shelf. Or, you might give the child a toy car that has a broken wheel. This strategy encourages children to try to solve the problem or ask you for your help.

PIECE BY PIECE

The next type of environmental arrangement is called **piece by piece**. This works well with toys that have many pieces like lego blocks or puzzles or with small snack foods such as small pretzels or raisins. You can encourage a child to ask for each piece as you hold it back from him or give just a small amount of snack so the child needs to "ask" for more. You may initiate a "piece by piece" routine by giving the child a couple of pieces with no demands. Then, on the third or fourth piece, hold it back to wait for communication.

INCIDENTAL TEACHING

Once you arrange the environment to encourage communication, you have set up a teaching opportunity. Now to make the most of this opportunity, let's look at some strategies you can use to prompt the type of communication you want from a child.

First, think about the environmental arrangement strategies we have discussed. They all involve setting up a situation where a child needs or wants to tell you or ask you something. She may point to or say something, but you would like the communication to be more sophisticated or complex. Here are the steps you can follow:

1. Set up the environment.
2. Wait 5 seconds with an expectant expression on your face. If the child initiates at an appropriate language level, repeat what she says, expand on it, praise her and/or give her the object.
3. If the child does not initiate, you may ask a question or make an open-ended statement (e.g. "What do you want?" or "Oh you want a...") If the child responds, give the object while repeating, expanding, and/or praising.
4. Step 2 can be repeated **one** time. You may ask the same question or change to a simpler one.
5. If the child does not respond, tell her what to say (e.g. "Say cookie please"). If the child responds correctly, give the object while repeating, expanding, and/or praising.
6. If the child does not respond, state the desired response and if appropriate, give the desired object. (At this point, if the child uses sign language or pictures to communicate, you can physically prompt the correct response).

Here are two examples:

1. *Mrs. S. placed Maggie's favorite book in a clear plastic bag and closed it tightly with a twist tie. ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY - VISIBLE BUT UNREACHABLE*
   When Maggie found the book, she brought it over to Mrs. S. during free play time. REQUEST - GIVES THE OBJECT
   Mrs. S. only looked at Maggie with an expectant look on her face and waited 5 seconds -STEP 1.
   When Maggie did not respond, Mrs. S. asked "What do you want?" and waited 5 seconds- STEP 2.
   Maggie still did not respond so Mrs. S. said "You want me to___." STEP 3
   Maggie did not respond. Mrs. S. said "Say 'read book'". - STEP 4.
   Maggie did not respond. Mrs. S. said "Read book" and read the book to Maggie - STEP 5..

2. *At snack time, Ms. T. gave Gabe his applesauce without a spoon. - ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY - FORGETFULNESS*
   Gabe looked at Ms. T. and said "apple" - REQUEST - USES ONE WORD
   Ms. T. looked at Gabe expectantly - STEP 1 Gabe said "apple"
   Ms.T. said "Heres your applesauce. Do you need something else?" - STEP 2
   Gabe did not respond.
   Ms. T. said "You need a spoon? Say 'spoon'" - STEP 4 Gabe said "poon"
   Ms. T. said "Oh you need a spoon for your applesauce" and gave him one. - EXPANSION

CONCLUSION

Communication includes a variety of skills that are important for young children to learn. For a child's communication to be functional, for her to be able to use it in many environments and with many different people, it must be taught in everyday situations. Responsive, environmental and incidental teaching strategies are the strategies that are designed to be used in these everyday situations.

SUMMARY

Think about the following:

1. How a child communicates:

    a. whines/cries
    b. reaches towards object
    c. points to object
    d. gives the object
    e. uses gestures or sign language
    f. shows a picture of the object
    g. vocalizes
    h. uses one word
    i. uses phrase or sentence

2. Why a child communicates:

    a. to request
    b. to protest
    c. to comment
    d. to answer questions
    e. to ask questions

3. A child communicates <u>when</u> and <u>where</u> he needs or wants to communicate. The three steps to remember to encourage a child to communicate are:

    a. WATCH
    b. WAIT
    c. FOLLOW THE CHILD'S LEAD

4. Some strategies for encouraging communication are:

    a. mirroring
    b. turn-taking
    c. reflecting
    d. expanding
    e. self-talk
    f. parallel talk

5. Environmental strategies for encouraging communication involve arranging the setting or materials you and the child are using to make it more likely that the child will need to or want to communicate. Some of these strategies are:

   a. forgetfulness
   b. visible but not reachable
   c. violate expectations/sabotage
   d. piece by piece

6. Incidental teaching involves setting up the environment then following these steps to prompt the appropriate communication.

   a. set up the environment
   b. wait 5 seconds with an expectant expression on your face
   c. if the child does not respond, ask a question or make an open-ended statement
   d. repeat or rephrase the question or statement
   e. tell the child what to say
   f. say the appropriate response and give the desired object

BRINGING IT HOME

Answer the following questions:

1. List three activities (or materials) that this child enjoys:

_____
_____
_____

2. Think about the environmental strategies listed her:
   -forgetfulness
   -visible but reachable
   -violate expectations
   -sabotage
   -piece by piece

Choose one of the activities this child enjoys and describe how you can use one of the environmental strategies to encourage communication during that activity.

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Think about the strategies for encouraging communication listed here:

   -mirroring
   -turn-taking
   -reflecting
   -expanding
   -self-talk
   -parallel talk

Choose another of this child's favorite activities and describe how you could encourage communication using one of these strategies:

_____
_____

IN A NUTSHELL

1. A child communicates in many ways and communicates for many reasons.

2. A child communicates when and where he/she needs or wants to communicate. The best time to teach communication skills is when and where a child needs or wants to communicate.

3. The three steps to remember to encourage a child to communicate are:

   a. **WATCH** - to see what the child is interested in and watch for signs that the child is communicating with you.
   b. **WAIT** - don't talk or ask questions for a few moments to give the child a chance to initiate communication (at least 5 seconds).
   c. **FOLLOW THE CHILD'S LEAD** - talk about and play with the materials that the child is interested in.

4. Some strategies for encouraging communication are:

   a. mirroring - imitate what the child says or does
   b. turn-taking - developing a pattern of conversation or behaviors in which you and the child alternate saying things
   c. reflecting - encouraging the child's attempt to communicate by repeating them back to him/her
   d. expanding - reflecting back what the child says and adding words to it to encourage new concepts or more elaborate sentence structure
   e. self-talk - talking about what you are doing, thinking, or feeling
   f. parallel talk - talking about what you are doing, thinking, or feeling.

5. Environmental strategies for encouraging communication involve arranging the setting or materials you and the child are using to make it more likely that the child will need to or want to communicate. Some of these strategies are:

   a. forgetfulness - purposefully "forgetting" to provide everything that is needed for an activity
   b. visible by unreachable - placing an object that the child needs or wants out of his reach, but still within sight
   c. violate expectations or sabotage - doing something silly, such as put a doll's shoe on the child's foot, or interfering with an activity
   d. piece by piece - holding back pieces of toys or foods to encourage the child to ask for them

6. Incidental teaching involves setting up the environment then following these steps to prompt the appropriate communication.

   a. Set up the environment
   b. Wait 5 seconds with an expectant expression on your face
   c. If the child does not respond, ask a question or make an open-ended statement
   d. If the child does not respond, repeat or rephrase
   e. If the child does not respond, tell him/her what to say.
   f. If the child does not respond, say the appropriate response and give the desired object.

LEAP PRESCHOOL

STAFF SKILL TRAINING PROGRAM

MODULE #10: Keeping Track of Children's Behavior

Main Ideas

- Importance of Keeping Track of Behavior
- Ways to Keep Track of Behavior
- How to Make Decisions About how and When to Keep Track of Behavior

Introduction

This packet is about keeping track of children's behavior. Behavior is defined as a specific action that can be observed. Often teachers are interested in changing children's behavior for one reason or another. Jeffrey's teacher may want him to play by himself for a longer time while she is busy. Amber's teacher may want her to have fewer toileting accidents. You can probably think of something that a child in your classroom does that you would like to change.

Throughout these modules we will often refer to a plan for change. A plan for change can be just an idea that you are going to try for a few days or a formal written behavior plan. Professionals often call a formal plan for change a behavior change program. When you develop a plan for change it is important to keep track of the behavior you want to change.

Why Keep Track

Do you remember what you wore to work yesterday? Can you remember what you wore the day before? How about last Tuesday? The further I go back the less likely it is that you'll remember, right? If your doctor wanted to know exactly what you were eating to decide whether you were getting an adequate diet, she may ask you to write down everything you eat for a whole week. Here's an example:

At her son Lamar's yearly doctor's visit, Janelle told her pediatrician that she was worried that Lamar was not getting enough of a variety of foods in his diet. She said that the day before, Lamar had refused all vegetables and fruit and had no milk or milk products. The doctor asked Janelle to write down everything Lamar eats for a whole week. The next week Janelle told the pediatrician that again, Lamar had refused all milk and vegetables on Tuesday, but drank five glasses of milk on Friday and ate a salad and two helpings of peas on Wednesday. By looking at Lamar's diet over the whole week, the pediatrician decided that his diet was adequate.

When this parent kept track of the child's food intake, she and her pediatrician were able to get an accurate, overall picture of Lamar's diet. So one reason that it's important to keep track of children's behavior is that it helps us to get an accurate, overall picture of a specific behavior. Let's look at another example. Let's say you and a bunch of your friends were given a lottery ticket by a friend and you each won a hundred dollars. If your friend told you that she thought you should give her "most" of the money since she bought the ticket, how much would you give her?

Now suppose your friend asked for "some" of the money. How much would you offer? What if your friend asked for "just a few dollars?"

Do you think all people would agree on how much most, some and just a few dollars means? Probably not. The reason we all do not agree is because they are very general terms. General terms or vague works often mean different things to different people. When we use such general terms to talk

about children's behavior, we run into the same problem. However, if you keep track of a behavior, you can be more specific when describing the behavior. So, another reason it's important to keep track of children's behavior is that it helps us to communicate more effectively.

Let's look at two everyday examples that emphasize a third reason for keeping track of behavior. Here's the first example:

> Mary was concerned about a three-year-old girl's tantrums in her classroom. When the behavior specialist was called in and asked how often Adelade tantrummed, Mary said, "all the time." The specialist asked Mary to place a checkmark on her calendar each time Adelade had a tantrum for one week. The next week, Mary told the specialist that she had counted two tantrums in the past week.

a. How often was Adelade tantrumming?

b. Do you think the tantrums were happening more or less often than Mary's original description?

Now here's another example:

In a discussion with the school specialist, Lee mentioned that a child in his class named Kim had insisted on being held by an adult all the previous day. When asked how often this occurred, Lee said that it didn't happen often but that it was very frustrating to him and his staff. The specialist suggested that they keep track for a couple weeks how often Kim insisted on being clingy. When Lee met with the specialist two weeks later he told her that they wanted some help with this situation because Kim had insisted on being held by them for nine of the past fourteen days.

a. How often was Kim actually insisting on being held by staff?

b. Was Kim's behavior happening more or less often than Lee's original description?

A third reason for keeping track of a child's behavior is that it helps us decide if a plan for change is needed. In the first example, the behavior specialist may suggest to Mary that two tantrums in one week is not unusual for a three-year-old new to a preschool situation. Although this teacher may want to discuss ways to respond to a tantrum, a formal plan for change may not be needed. In the second example, Lee and his staff decided that they did want to try to change Kim's behavior. Together with the specialist, they will probably develop some type of plan for change.

Keeping track of children's behavior can also help us to develop a plan for change. If we keep track of a behavior that we want to change we can decide

if a change in what happens before the behavior (antecedent) could prevent the behavior from happening. We could also look at what happens after the behavior (consequence) to determine if it may be causing the behavior to continue.

Finally, keeping track of children's behavior can help us decide if a plan for change is working. Say, for example, that you read in a teaching magazine that putting a child in a corner for hitting is a good procedure to use. A four-year-old in your classroom often hits classmates, so you decide to try this method. After four weeks of putting her in the corner each time she hits a classmate, you figure that the plan for change isn't working because the girl is still hitting. It is important to point out, however, that you must be sure that you have put her in the corner for every incidence of hitting before deciding to change plans.

Suppose that someone actually counted how often the girl hit a classmate. When you first started the plan for change, she typically hit five times a day. Now, four weeks later, she hits once a day. Is the plan for change working? Even though the behavior has not gone away completely, it is happening less often. Sometimes when a behavior is very frustrating to a teacher, it seems that it is happening more often than it really is. For this reason, keeping track of the behavior can give us a better idea of whether a plan for change is working.

Let's review the reasons that it is important to keep track of children's behavior. Keeping track of children's behavior:

a. helps us get an accurate, overall picture of a specific behavior,
b. helps us communicate more effectively,
c. helps us decide if a plan for change is needed,
d. helps us develop a plan for change, and
e. helps us decide if a plan for change is working.

How to Keep Track: Anecdotal Information

Now that we know why it important to keep track of children's behavior, let's think about ways to keep track. What information do we need to know about a behavior? That question in itself is often difficult to answer. Sometimes we do not know what we want to keep track of. When this happens, it is often helpful to write information down on a calendar or in a journal or notebook. This type of information is called anecdotal information. Although this may not be an exact count or measurement, it can be very helpful in looking at what happens before and after children's behavior. anecdotal information means that you simply jot down notes about the child to help you remember things that the child does. It is often helpful when a parent writes down notes about new skills her child is learning to share this information with the child's teachers. Anecdotal information is also useful for medical issues such as in the example of the parent writing down what her child ate for one week. Other medical information that may be kept in a journal or notebook

include descriptions of seizures, reactions to medications, and allergic reactions to foods.

Another type of anecdotal information is breaking a behavior down into the "ABC's of Behavior." This means to look at what happens before a behavior (antecedent), and what happens after a behavior (consequence). Please refer to Example 1 on the following page.

ACTIVITY SHEET 1

Example 1:

Date	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
1/16	Waiting in line at door	Screams	Gave back rub to quiet
1/17	Waiting for circle to start	Screams/Tantrums	Put on teacher's lap to quiet
1/18	Waiting for bus to arrive	Tantrum/laying on floor	Bus came, took him home
1/19	Gary waiting to get help with coat	Tantrum/laying on floor	Put his coat on first and took him outside

Example 2:

Lynn is keeping track of how often Stacy asks for help each day.

Number of times Stacy asks for help	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
DATE										

5 = 15 - 20 times
4 = 10 - 15 times
3 = 5 - times
2 = less than 5 times
1 = did not ask for help at all that day

In this example, Teresa broke down the child's tantrum behavior into the ABC's of behavior-antecedent, behavior, and consequence. From this information, can you give a suggestion for a plan for change for Teresa and Gary? What could Teresa do when she knows Gary will need to wait for something? (ANSWER: Give Gary something to do whenever waiting is involved). How could Teresa change the way she and others react when Gary does scream or have a tantrum? (ANSWER: Have him ask for what he wants, ignore tantrum or screaming, do not give him something pleasant). Anecdotal information, as in this example, is often helpful in deciding if a plan for change is needed and in developing a plan for change.

How to Keep Track: Exact Measures

Let's look at how you can keep a more exact count or measure of a child's behavior. We first need to ask ourselves, "What type of information do we need to know about a behavior?" Suppose you were concerned because a child often pinches you when he gets angry. If you wanted to keep track of this behavior, you would count how often the child pinched you. Counting how often a behavior happens is called a frequency count. Frequency counts are used when you want to know how many times a behavior occurs. For example, if a teacher is concerned about a student who talks out loudly int he classroom, she may start by taking a frequency count of the behavior. This would tell her

how many times the student talks out. A person interested in cutting down on smoking might keep track of the number of cigarettes smoked per day. A teacher may count how many times a child picks up after himself during clean up time each week.

Frequency counts of behavior tell us how often a behavior occurs. Let's see if you can restate some sentences that describe how someone feels about how often a behavior occurs. For each of the following sentences, pretend that you actually took a frequency count and restate the sentence using that information:

a) Tommy occasionally has toileting accidents.
(Tommy had ___ toileting accidents last week.)

b) Caleb sometimes says "Hi" to other children.
(Caleb said "Hi" to _ children in his class today.)

c) Karen's tantrums are decreasing.
(Karen had _ tantrums today.)

Now, what if you wanted to increase the amount of time a child played in a certain area? You would need to write down how long the child played in the area(s) to begin with. You could do this by looking at a timer, a stopwatch, or just by looking at the clock. When you measure how long a behavior lasts, this is called a duration count. For example, if a parent is trying to increase the time his son will sit for a meal, he would watch the clock to measure how long his son sits. When we try to find some short-cuts to work or to the shopping

mall, we use a duration count; we measure how long it takes us when we use a particular route.

A duration count measures how long a behavior lasts. Practice describing durations of behavior. See if you can restate these sentences to indicate an exact duration of the behavior:

a) Jason is playing with toys for a longer time now.
(Jason played in housekeeping for 25 minutes today.)

b) Rodney screams all day long.
(Rodney screamed for two hours and 25 minutes today.)

c) Pam never throws her garbage away after snack.
(Pam threw her garbage away one time this week.)

Sometimes we may need to keep track of both how often and how long a behavior happens. Read this example:

> Marita wanted Bobby to tantrum less often so she decided to ignore him and walk away from him whenever he started to tantrum. She also kept track of his tantrum behavior. During the first day, Marco had seven tantrums that each lasted at least a half hour. Three weeks later, Marco was still averaging seven or eight tantrums a day. Marita was not discouraged though, and felt like ignoring the tantrums was really working. This is because she also kept track of how long the tantrums lasted. By the third week, the tantrums were only lasting five to ten minutes.

So, even though Marco was having the same number of tantrums, the length of the tantrums was decreasing. If Marita had not kept track of both how often and how long the tantrums were happening, she may have given up

on her plan for change too soon. Can you think of other behaviors you would want to measure by looking at both how often and how long they happened?

EXAMPLES:

a) Bedtime: If a child often wakes up in the middle of the night and roams around the house, you could keep track of the number of nights this behavior happens and how long the child is up.

b) Playing with others: If you would like a child to play with other children better, you could keep track of how many times each day he plays with others, and how long he plays with others.

The final more exact type of measurement we are going to discuss is how well a behavior is done. One way to measure how well a behavior is done is to keep track of how much help you need to give a child for him to be successful. Think about this example:

> Ann wanted Sammy to begin to feed himself with a spoon during snack. When she first started to work on this new skill, Ann needed to keep her hand over Sammy's hand and guide him through each step. Each day, when the snack was over, Ann would write HOH (hand over hand) on a piece of paper. One day, Ann placed the spoon in Sammy's hand and guided him by placing her hand over Sammy's wrist. That day, she marked a W (for wrist) on the paper. As time went on, she needed only to place the spoon in Sammy's hand and Sammy could scoop the food and feed himself. On these days, Ann marked a SH (spoon in hand) on the paper. Finally, a big star appeared on the paper for three days in a row. Sammy was feeding himself independently.

Some other skills that you may keep track of by indicating how much help you are giving a child are dressing skills (such as putting on her coat or putting on shoes and socks), or drawing skills (such as painting a picture or coloring a circle).

The other way to keep track of how well a behavior is done is to look at how many times a behavior or skill is done correctly compared to how many times the child is asked to do the skill. This is called the percentage correct. Here's an example:

> Michael was learning to sign "cookie." Once a week, his teacher Nancy would write down how many times he signed "cookie" in one day compared to how many times she asked him to sign it. The first week Michael signed "cookie" five times. By the next week, Nancy was pretty sure he knew how to sign "cookie," but again, he signed "cookie" five times. At first glance it may seem that there is no change. However, because Nancy also kept track of the number of times she had asked Michael to sign, she could figure out the percentage of times he signed correctly. The first week she had asked Michael to sign "cookie" ten times and he had done it correctly five times (five out of ten or 50%). The next week he was asked to sign "cookie" five times and he had done it every time (five out of five or 100%).

Keeping track of just the number of times Michael signed "cookie" was not enough. to get a complete picture of whether or not Michael was learning the sign, Nancy also needed to keep track of how many times she had asked him to sign "cookie" and figure out the percentage correct.

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How to Keep Track: Rating Scales

Sometimes it may not be feasible or possible to record exact information about a child's behavior. This is particularly true with behaviors that happen very often throughout the day. Another way that teachers can keep track of their student's behavior is to record an estimate of the behavior on a rating scale. You've probably heard the question, "How would you rate that on a scale form 1 to 10?" Rating a behavior in this manner is using a rating scale. Rating scales provide us with some information about the behavior we are observing. Rating a child's behavior each day can provide us with an overall picture of the child's behavior. Rating scales can be used to record frequency, duration, level of assistance, or percentage correct. Let's look at an example of a rating scale. Please refer to Example 2 on Activity Sheet 1 on page 7. What do you think are some advantages to using a rating scale? (ANSWER: easy to do; provides an overall estimate). What do you think are some disadvantages to using a rating scale? (ANSWER: Not an exact measure of the behavior; feelings may influence rating; may not indicate small changes in behavior).

Deciding How and When to Keep Track

An important thing to remember when deciding how and when you are going to keep track of a child's behavior is practicality. Nobody expects you to watch the child all day while he is at school to track a behavior. If a behavior

happens very often, it would be difficult to try to write down information every time it happened. In this case, you may want to use a rating scale or only keep track during a short period of each day. Another option may be to keep track of a certain behavior only one or two days each week.

Consistency is also important when deciding how and why you are going to keep track of a child's behavior. It is helpful to choose a way to keep track of the behavior that is not disruptive to your daily classroom routine. If you have to run to the child's folder to write down information each time the child throws toys, you may find yourself being less consistent. In this case, you could write the information down on something that you can easily carry with you or wait until the end of the day and write down approximate information on a rating scale or data sheet. Whatever method you choose, it is better to record accurate information less frequently than to collect inaccurate information every day.

Summary

A. Keeping track of behavior helps us to:

1. get an accurate, overall picture of a specific behavior,
2. communicate more effectively,
3. develop a plan for change, and
4. decide if a plan for change is working.

B. One way to keep track of behavior is through anecdotal information. This means simply writing down notes to help you remember things that the child does. (ABC)

C. Counting how often a behavior happens is called a frequency count.

D. Measuring how long a behavior lasts is called a duration count.

E. Two ways to keep track of how well a behavior is done are:

1. how much help a child needs to do the behavior, and
2. the percentage of times the child responds correctly.

F. A rating scale records an estimate of the child's behavior.

G. Select a method of keeping track that you are able to do consistently without disrupting your daily routine.

Bringing it Home

Think about one behavior of a child in your classroom that you would like to change. Answer the following questions:

What behavior would I like to change? _____

How can I keep track of this behavior?

- Anecdotal information _____
- How often it occurs (frequency) _____
- How long it lasts (duration) _____
- How much help is needed _____
- Percentage correct _____
- Rating scale _____

Where can I keep track of this behavior?

- Notebook _____
- Calendar _____
- IEP Goal Sheet _____
- Special Data Sheet _____
- Other (specify) _____

Use the back of this page to design a simple data sheet if needed.

When can I keep track of this behavior?

- All day, every day _____
- All day, one day a week _____
- A short period of time each day _____
- Other (specify) _____

If you can, keep track of this behavior as you have described above. If you would like to share the information you collected, contact the LEAP Outreach team to sit down with you and we can discuss your findings.

In a Nutshell

1. Why is it important to keep track of a child's behavior?

   a) to help get an accurate, overall picture of a specific behavior,
   b) to help to communicate more effectively,
   c) to help to decide if a plan for change is needed,
   d) to help to develop a plan for change, and
   e) to help to decide if a plan for change is working.

2. How can you keep track of a child's behavior?

   a) You can keep track of anecdotal information by jotting down notes to help you remember what your child does.

   b) You can keep track of how often a behavior happens. This is called a frequency count.

   c) You can keep track of how long a behavior lasts. This is called a duration count.

   d) Sometimes you may want to keep track of both how often and how long a behavior happens.

   e) You can keep track of how well a behavior is done by writing down how much help the child needs to do a behavior or what percentage of the time the child responds correctly.

   f) You can keep track of an estimate of the child's behavior by using a rating scale.

3. What things should you think about when you are trying to decide how and when to keep track of a child's behavior?

   a) Practicality. Keep track of behaviors at a time that is convenient. Don't let keeping track of behaviors interrupt your daily routine.

   b) Consistency. Even if you have to write down information less frequently, be as consistent as possible.

LEAP PRESCHOOL

STAFF SKILL TRAINING PROGRAM

MODULE #11: Monitoring Group Instruction

Main Ideas

- Why Monitoring Procedures are Important
- How to Monitor Group Instruction
- How to Cue the Teacher
- Behaviors that Cannot be Ignored

Introduction

Monitoring means aiding the teacher in supervising the children in order to maintain appropriate instructional behavior. The monitor must carefully observe the children and the teacher. The monitor is at an advantage in that he/she can observe the entire group and may observe behaviors the teacher may miss while teaching. There are nine possible monitoring interventions. The monitor must know which interventions to use and when to use it. These interventions are listed below and explained with examples.

Description of Monitoring Interventions

Environmental arrangements: Children sitting too close to each other may create inappropriate instructional behavior. Therefore, the monitor can aid the teacher by arranging seating patterns by: a) making sure all children are at least a hand apart; and, b) making sure all children can see the activity.

Careful observation of the entire group: This strategy is precursory to all other interventions. Observation of the group should be continual, and may be all that is necessary. If all the children are on task and attending to the teacher, no other intervention may be necessary. Be sure to continually observe the group instead of attending only to the lesson (it is easy to get caught up in watching the teacher instead of watching the children.)

Cuing the teacher: The teacher has more reinforcing power during the lesson time than the monitor. The goal is to have the children attend to the teacher. The teacher is very busy remembering the lesson and directing all of the children. If the monitor is carefully observing, she/he will notice more child behaviors. For example, a child has been sitting appropriately for a long period of time and has not been called upon or talked to by the teacher. The monitor should cue the teacher, or remind him/her about the child by a slight wave and point to the child. Another example is noticing who has been raising his/her hand then cuing the teacher to notice the child.

Reinforcing appropriate instructional behavior: Some children can only sit and attend for brief periods of time. If the teacher is not able to attend to the child, the monitor may have to reinforce the child. For example, watch a child and every 5 minutes reinforce the child by quietly whispering in his/her ear, "I like the way you are sitting," or "You remembered to raise you hand." The monitor can couple this statement by touching the child also. Sometimes reinforcing may only require a gentle touch on the head or rub on the arm.

Differential reinforcement of other behaviors: Often other children in the group can be used as models for appropriate behavior. For example, Billy is standing up during the lesson. Rather than call attention to Billy's behavior the monitor will praise Suzy who is sitting next to him appropriately. The monitor

could say, "Fantastic, Suzy is sitting, she can pick the next song." If Billy then sits, the monitor should immediately reinforce his behavior.

Interruption: Sometimes the monitor may actually have to interrupt an inappropriate behavior. This would be necessary if one child was bothering another child causing both children to be off task. For example, Joey is talking and making faces at Susan who is sitting next to him. The monitor interrupts this by moving in between the children and reinforcing Susan for sitting appropriately, or cuing her to look at the teacher. Remember, when Joey becomes appropriate, reinforce him or cue the teacher to attend to him.

Cuing the child: The monitor can also cue the child to perform an appropriate behavior. The monitor can cue the child to "raise your hand if you want to say something." Cuing for the child should occur right before a certain behavior is expected. For example, if children are sitting down to begin an activity, the monitor can say, "look at the teacher." A special kind of cuing is cuing the whole group to watch an on-going activity. The monitor can talk aloud about the activity to direct children's attention to what is going on. For example, the group may be watching a child walk through an obstacle course, the monitor may say, "Look at Johnny, can he make it over the balance beam? Let's watch...He did it."

Redirection: This is a form of interruption but is additional and it is to the child who is inappropriate. It means directing the child's attention to something appropriate such as the teacher. For example, a child may be looking out the window. The monitor may say to the child, "Look at the teacher, what is she doing?" The monitor interrupted the inappropriate behavior and redirected the child to the teacher. The monitor may have to continue with a few sentences about the lesson to keep the child interested and redirected before leaving the child.

Special programming: Sometimes staff and a child's parents decide to implement a specific intervention for a child's behavior. This means baselines have indicated a specific behavior is at a high rate or is interfering with learning. Probes have been taken and an intervention decided upon. Some examples follow:

a) A child uses inappropriate language and time-out is implemented each time this behavior occurs.

b) A child excessively waves his hands excessively or places hands in mouth. The intervention chosen is called "contingent hands down," meaning each time the behavior occurs, the monitor places the child's hands down on his lap.

c) A child calls out inappropriately. The intervention is pulling the child away from the activity each time the behavior occurs.

d) A token program is implemented to increase appropriate behavior. A child is rewarded with some sort of token for good behavior on a set schedule.

e) A child is reinforced for appropriate behavior on a set time schedule by the teacher with cuing by the monitor.

All the previous examples are implemented only after all other monitoring procedures have been attempted without success. If a special program is required, the adult intervening would be carefully prepared beforehand. Many times, it will be that person's's only responsibility.

Monitoring procedures demand the full attention of the monitor. Monitoring also requires careful observation and decision making skills. The interventions have been presented in an approximate hierarchy of least restrictive intervention. But many times monitoring involves a combination of all the interventions. Be observant and on-task at all times. Remember to be responsible for all children.

Behaviors That Cannot Be Ignored

1. Walking away from the lesson. The monitor should take the child's hand and bring him/her back to the lesson. Avoid giving the child attention by talking or providing eye-contact. Stay close so that it does not happen again.

2. Standing up. Attempt differential reinforcement. If this does not succeed in 10 seconds, gently guide the child without saying anything to sit down. If the child is trying to see materials in the lesson, cue the teacher to show the materials to the child.

3. Not participating. If it is a circle activity and a child is not participating, help him by physically assisting the child with fingerplays or hand motions.

4. Lying down. Attempt differential reinforcement. If this strategy is not successful in 10 seconds, physically help the child to sit up. Redirect the child back to the lesson and stay with the child until he/she is attending again.

Summary

A. Monitoring Interventions include:

1. Environmental arrangements
2. Careful observation of the entire group
3. Curing the teacher
4. Reinforcing appropriate instructional behavior
5. Differential reinforcement of other behaviors
6. Interruption
7. Cuing the Child
8. Redirection
9. Special Programming

B. Behaviors that cannot be ignored include:

1. Walking away from the lesson
2. Standing up
3. Not participating
4. Lying down

Bringing It Home

Read the following examples and select a monitoring strategy.

1. The teacher is reading a story. Instead of listening to the story, Sammy decides to repeatedly poke David, who is sitting right next to her. David screams every time she touches him.

What strategy would you use to get Sammy and David back on task?

_____

_____

_____

2. It is show-and-tell time and Ricky is showing the group his new Mega man toy. Many of the children are either lying down or talking to one another. Very few children are listening to Ricky.

How would you get everyone to pay attention to Ricky?

_____

_____

_____

3. Everyday during circletime Kevin has been pinching the children sitting on either side of him. You have tried moving him between different children, redirecting him back to the lesson and differential reinforcement. All have been ineffective! What strategy would you try next?

_____

_____

_____

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PREFACE

The purpose of this manual is to educate classroom assistants on basic principles of child development and behavior management. These training materials were originally developed to teach parents and classroom staff ways to educate children with disabilities within an inclusive preschool setting. However, the information presented certainly applies to and can be effectively utilized with typically developing children and children with disabilities in self-contained classrooms.

INTRODUCTION

Changes in Education

Many classroom assistants are now being hired to support children with disabilities in regular education settings or inclusive settings. Before we begin the training modules, we feel it is important to discuss why the movement in education is to teach typically developing children and children with disabilities within the same classroom environment. Often times, individuals who are not directly trained in special education have many questions about why and how these two groups are brought together.

What does inclusion mean?

All children are unique, and every child has different needs. No two children learn to crawl, walk, or speak at exactly the same pace. Primarily though, children are more alike than they are different. Inclusion is a belief that all children belong and should be valued for their individual differences. An inclusive program should provide children with disabilities the same educational and social opportunities as children without disabilities. "An inclusive school is a place where everyone belongs, is accepted, supports and is supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his or her educational needs met" (Stainback and

Stainback, 1990).

The term integration refers to "the grouping of children with and without disabilities." This term is often used interchangeably with the term inclusion, however, there are some differences. Integration can occur in one of the following ways:

1) children with disabilities are placed in programs or join classroom activities specifically designed to serve typical children (mainstreaming);

2) children without disabilities participate in programs specifically designed for children with disabilities (this is sometimes called reversed mainstreaming); or

3) children with and without disabilities participate in programs designed to teach and support all children (inclusion)

The term "participate" is key in defining what inclusion is and what inclusion is not. Simply placing children with disabilities into a classroom setting with children who do not have disabilities does not guarantee a successful program. Children with disabilities will not make developmental gains unless intervention efforts are planned, systematic and individualized. Modifying the curriculum, adapting classroom materials, or altering instructional practices may be necessary to support student participation. The success of a program is centered around the ability of the staff to look at each child individually and plan a program based on their strengths, skills, and needs.

All staff members must understand that the program they are creating recognizes, respects, and is designed for the differences each child presents. The child is not "primed and readied" for the expectations of the classroom, rather the classroom is primed and ready for the child.

In order for inclusion to be successful, physical, social and instructional integration must occur. Physical integration refers to the placement of children with and without disabilities in the same early childhood setting, in other words, sharing the same physical space. However, this does not imply that children are learning and playing together.

Social integration provides formal and informal opportunities for children to play and interact with each other. Social integration can not be achieved by simply placing children with disabilities with normally developing children. Adult intervention is needed to promote interactions between the two groups. For example, the classroom staff teach children specific ways to play together, share toys, take turns, and cooperate with one another. Friendship building activities are planned and children learn strategies for initiating play, communicating with nonverbal partners, and helping peers with physical limitations.

Instructional integration ensures that the specific instructional needs of children with disabilities are being met within the early childhood setting. As educators, it our job to create a match between the program and the child's

individual needs. Learning goals should accommodate the individual skill level of each child participating in a lesson. The following is an example of instructional integration:

Mrs. Rogers is teaching the children about transportation. She shows the children pictures of different modes of transportation and asks the class to verbally identify the pictures. Andrew, who is a part of this group, has not developed verbal language but uses a picture system to communicate. In order to include Andrew in the lesson, Mrs. Rogers gives Andrew his own set of transportation pictures. As the children call out the answer "car," Mrs. Rogers asks Andrew to point to the picture of the car on his picture board.

In this example, Mrs. Rogers made a simple adaptation to her lesson so that Andrew could participate. Andrew has a communication deficit and requires additional support in this area. Mrs. Roger's recognized what Andrew needed (a way to communicate) and capitalized on his strengths (his ability to use pictures to communicate).

What are the benefits of inclusion?

There are many reasons why children with disabilities should be included in the same educational settings as children without disabilities. One of the strongest reasons is that inclusion provides daily opportunities for children to observe, imitate, and interact with other children in their peer group. Learning through imitation is crucial to all children's development. The use of peer models for teaching new skills has been shown to be an effective instructional

tool. Providing peer models who have higher level language, social, cognitive, and motor skills increases opportunities for imitation in these skill areas. Conversely, segregating people with disabilities may heighten or increase imitation of undesired behavior patterns.

What is my role in an inclusive program?

A successful plan for inclusion is built on teamwork. Everyone involved must be committed to problem solving, growing, thinking, and working together as a team to ensure that social and instructional integration is occurring. Staff members must also commit themselves to working together with professionals from other agencies as well as with the families of the children involved. Inclusion truly is a community effort.

Why are more children with disabilities in regular education classrooms?

From a legal standpoint, the Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that segregation in public education is discriminatory and illegal. Beginning with the early civil rights decision (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954), the country's legislators and court systems have supported the contention that "separate is not equal." Any child with a disability has the right to participate in the same public programs available to a child without a disability. The information presented on the following pages outlines 40 years of federal legislation that has shaped the way in which we now educate children with disabilities in today's classrooms.

Legislative Support for Inclusion

1954 Brown v. Board of Education

This Supreme Court decision is the major point of Civil Rights movement- all other things being the same, "separate is not equal."

1968 Public Law 90-538 Handicapped Children's Early Education Assistance Act

This law provided funding for researching ways to improve early childhood education services, develop model demonstration programs and disseminate information through outreach efforts. This program is now referred to as the Early Education Project for Children with Disabilities (EEPCD).

1972 Public Law 92-424 Head Start Amendments

Although Head Start programs were open to any family that met certain economic criteria, this law mandated that Head Start programs reserve 10% of its enrollment slots for students with developmental disabilities. In 1974, criteria for obtaining a slot was more clearly defined as one of the following impairments: mental retardation, deafness or serious hard-of-hearing, serious speech impairments, serious visual impairments, crippling orthopedic impairments, chronic health disabilities, or learning disabilities.

1973 Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act

This civil rights act stated that any program receiving federal funds could not discriminate against persons with disabilities.

1975 Public Law 94-142 Education for All Handicapped Children's Act

This law established federally-mandated special education, requiring all states to provide free and appropriate public education for children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE) regardless of the severity of their disability. LRE is defined as being educated in an environment that is "to the maximum extent appropriate" similar or the same as where children without disabilities are being educated. This law also provided specific support to early education programs for children under 5 years of age by giving states funding for locating and serving preschool children in need of early intervention services (Child Find). School districts were mandated to provide all children, regardless of the severity of their disability a free education that appropriately meets their needs. The terms for what is considered to be appropriate for that child must be outlined in an **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**. Short term and long term goals for meeting the child's needs must be documented in this plan.

1986 Public Law 99-457 Amended the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act

Comprehensive legislation that increased funding for hiring and training more early childhood providers. Added Title I funding, which is discretionary funding (states may provide service, but are not required to do so) for infants and toddlers. Title I funding served infants and toddlers with developmental delays or at risk for having delays. Diagnostic labels are not required to receive services but an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or written assessment of needs must be developed. IFSP's identifies the needs of the family and child, lists family strengths and resources, and state mutually agreed upon short term and long term objectives for meeting those needs.

1993 Oberti v. Board of Education of Clementon School District

The judge in this case ruled in favor of a child's right to receive inclusive education. "Inclusion is a right, not a privilege for a select few."

Why should I support inclusion?

In addition to being legally supported, inclusion is the right ethical choice to make. Inclusion recognizes the work and importance of every individual. By isolating one group of children from another, we are, in essence, saying we do not value the contributions individuals with disabilities can make. No individual should be so labeled or pre-judged; rather, each individual should be given every opportunity to realize their full potential and make contributions to society.

THE LEAP OUTREACH PROJECT